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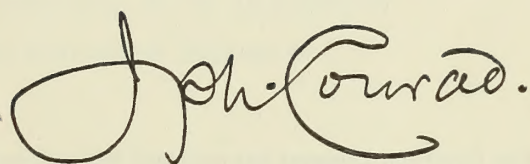
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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph Conrad." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J" and a distinct "C" at the end.

JOSEPH CONRAD | LETTERS TO WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND
DAVID S. MELDRUM | EDITED BY WILLIAM BLACKBURN | DUR-
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FOR
WING COMMANDER G. D. BLACKWOOD
MISS ELIZABETH MELDRUM



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PREFACE

The following letters to William Blackwood comprise, I believe, the only extensive correspondence between Joseph Conrad and a British publisher. Their survival is owing first of all to the strong historical sense of the firm, as well as to the happy accident of geography, namely, that the House of William Blackwood and Sons is to be found at 45 George Street, Edinburgh. The files of many London publishers, including those in Blackwood's London office, went up in flames when Paternoster Row was leveled in the great fire raid of 29-30 December 1940. Other London publishers of Conrad, not situated on Paternoster Row, have felt obliged to get rid of their old correspondence for lack of storage space. But in Edinburgh the vast correspondence addressed to the firm since its inception in 1804 or to the editor of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (*Maga*) since its beginning in 1817 has escaped the ravages of time and circumstance.

In 1942 the late George Blackwood and his brother the late James Blackwood—the “Mr. George” and “Mr. James” of this

correspondence—turned over to the National Library of Scotland all the letters received by the house from its foundation to the end of the year 1900. Among these are the letters of Conrad to William Blackwood, 1897-1900. I should like to thank the custodians of the Blackwood Papers, Mr. William Park and Mr. James Ritchie, of the Department of Manuscripts, for their courtesies.

The volume has been made possible by Wing Commander G. D. Blackwood, present head of the firm and Editor of *Maga*. Mr. Blackwood has let me use the letters of Conrad addressed to William Blackwood, 1901-1913, which are in the letterbooks of the house. To this initial kindness he has added others, as, for example, his giving me permission to include the letters of William Blackwood to Conrad, copies of which have been preserved, and those which have to do with Conrad addressed by David S. Meldrum of the London office to William Blackwood. Since the names of Conrad and Stephen Crane are inextricably bound together—and both are bound to *Maga*—Mr. Blackwood has also given me freedom in running the paragraphs about Crane which I discovered in the Meldrum correspondence. Mr. Blackwood's active interest in this editorial enterprise has been matched by his patience with the editor—his “unwearied indulgence,” as Conrad would have said.

David S. Meldrum wrote from 37 Paternoster Row to Edinburgh nearly every day during his tenure as literary adviser to the firm, 1896-1910. In these letters he frequently tells Blackwood of his having heard from Conrad, a fact which led me to believe that a correspondence between the two existed. Accordingly I searched out Meldrum's will in Edinburgh and found that his daughter Elizabeth is his literary executor. The kindness of the Town Clerk of Kirkcaldy, Fifeshire, Mr. Charles D. Chapman, enabled me to get in touch with her. I shall never forget Miss Meldrum's hospitality on my two visits to Kirkcaldy nor her willingness to entrust to me the seventy-three letters of Conrad's written to her father.

To sum up: the sources of the letters in this volume are as follows:

- (1) Conrad to Blackwood, 1897-1900: The National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.
- (2) Conrad to Blackwood, 1901-1913: William Blackwood and Sons, Ltd., Edinburgh.
- (3) Blackwood to Conrad (copies): William Blackwood and Sons, Ltd.
- (4) Meldrum to Blackwood, J. B. Pinker to Blackwood: William Blackwood and Sons, Ltd.
- (5) Conrad to Meldrum: Duke University Library.

The photograph of William Blackwood has been kindly provided by Mr. Blackwood, that of Conrad by Miss Meldrum. I should have liked to include a photograph of David S. Meldrum, but unfortunately none could be found.

It is a pleasure to recall those who have helped me in the preparation of this volume: Miss Margery Gray Wynne, Rare Book Room, Yale University Library; the Messrs. Drake of James F. Drake, Inc., New York; Miss Elizabeth Chalmers, Edinburgh; Vice-President Paul M. Gross, Duke University; Mr. Benjamin E. Powell, Librarian, Duke University, and his staff, especially Miss Mattie Russell of the Manuscripts Department and Miss Florence E. Blakely of the Reference Room; Miss Dorothy Roberts, Mrs. Mary A. Muller, Secretaries to the English Department at Duke; my colleagues, Professors Clarence Gohdes and William H. Irving; Mr. Ashbel G. Brice, Director, Duke University Press, and his associates, Mr. William G. Owens and Mr. John Menapace.

My thanks are due the following publishers and literary agents for permission to quote from copyrighted books:

The Bobbs-Merrill Company, *Letters from Joseph Conrad, 1895 to 1924*, edited by Edward Garnett.

William Heinemann, Ltd., *Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters*, by G. Jean-Aubry.

Yale University Press, *Letters of Joseph Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska, 1890-1920*, edited by John A. Gee and Paul J. Sturm.

J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., *Conrad's Prefaces to His Works*, edited by Edward Garnett.

I am most grateful to the following for permission to quote MS letters, either entire or in part: Mr. John Dozier Gordan of New York; Mr. William James of Cambridge, Massachusetts; Mr. McGrigor Donald of Glasgow, Scotland; Mr. Richard W. Morin of the Dartmouth College Library; Mr. Richard H. Logsdon of the Columbia University Library.

Mr. Jocelyn Baines of London has been good enough to read this book in page proof and to make several valuable suggestions.

I owe special thanks to the Council on Research, Duke University, for various grants-in-aid.

I wish, finally, to thank the Conrad Trustees for their permission to publish the Conrad letters in this volume.

Durham, North Carolina

5 June 1958

WILLIAM BLACKBURN

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CONRAD AND WILLIAM BLACKWOOD

I

The letters of Joseph Conrad to William Blackwood, the Edinburgh publisher, begin in the summer of 1897 and extend into the winter of 1903, a period of about five and a half years. They begin at the time of Conrad's breach with his first publisher, T. Fisher Unwin;¹ for all practical purposes, they come to a conclusion when James B. Pinker, the celebrated literary agent, took over the responsibility for placing his work. In terms of Conrad's writing career, the letters cover the period from the completion of *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*—when Conrad was forty—to the beginning of *Nostromo*.

The letters to Blackwood are fortified by those to David S. Meldrum, literary adviser in the London office of the firm, who became one of Conrad's friends and whose name must now be added to that small circle of readers who were the first to recog-

¹ The breach was not, of course, complete. In addition to Conrad's first two novels, Unwin also published *Tales of Unrest* (1898), *The Arrow of Gold* (1919), and *The Rover* (1923).

nize in him a writer of enduring quality. Looking forward in time, Meldrum perceived that "in the annals of *Maga* [the nickname for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*] half a century hence it will be one of the honourable things to record of her that she entertained 'Jim.'" Looking backward, he was of the opinion that *Youth: A Narrative and Other Stories* was the "most notable book we have published since George Eliot."²

Edward Garnett was indirectly responsible for Conrad's appearance in *Blackwood's*, just as he had been directly responsible, as reader for Fisher Unwin, for the publication of *Almayer's Folly* in 1895. Once having discovered Conrad, Garnett handled this sailor-turned-novelist (who for several years still entertained the notion of returning to sea) with a tact almost amounting to genius. He was never guilty, for example, of trying to make a writer of him but was content if he could persuade him to compose yet another book. "You have written one book. It is very good. Why not write another?" This modest question, as Conrad was fond of remarking in retrospect, inspired him to compose *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896) and proved to be the turning point in his career. Unwin lost heavily on both *Almayer* and *The Outcast* and was naturally reluctant to make more than a token offer for the third novel, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus.'* This reluctance brought matters to a head. As David Garnett says, his father's loyalty to Conrad extended even to his "protecting"³ him from his own employer. When, therefore, Unwin offered £50, Conrad, emboldened by his friend, asked for a hundred. Unwin's negative response led Garnett to introduce Conrad to Sidney Pawling, partner of William Heinemann. And in April of 1897, when Conrad seemed at a loss to know what to do with his short story "Karain: A Memory," Garnett spoke with sudden inspiration and authority: it was "destined by Providence," he said, for *Blackwood's Magazine*.⁴ By late August of this year Conrad was lyrical with gratitude over his having been accepted by Heinemann and by Blackwood.

² See Extracts of 16 February 1900 and 19 December 1902, below.

³ *Prefaces*, vi.

⁴ *Garnett*, xxviii.

"All the good moments," he wrote Garnett, "the real good ones in my new life I owe to you. . . . You sent me to Pawling—you sent me to Blackwoods—when are you going to send me to heaven?"⁵ Even so, the situation was not without its awkwardness, for it involved Conrad in a conflict of loyalties between publishers which is immediately apparent in these letters.

William Blackwood was the third member of the family to bear his name and the fifth editor in the line of succession. At the time this present correspondence begins, he had been a member of the firm for forty years and editor for twenty. At sixty-one he found his chief pride as always in the honorable tradition of the house and in the loyalty that the firm inspired in its authors. This pride was given bodily form in a history of the house which he commissioned Mrs. Oliphant, the well-known novelist, to write. This work was a salute to a hundred years of Blackwood publishing as the century drew to a close. The consciousness of a historical role impregnates much that William Blackwood did as editor. His extraordinary solicitude for Conrad's material welfare, for example, had nothing personal about it. On the contrary, he was but carrying out "what has been the desire of all those who have gone before me in our connection with our authors."⁶

One of Conrad's friends, Sir Hugh Clifford, takes notice of the high esteem in which *Maga* was held during the editorship of William Blackwood. "It was, I think, the ambition of all young writers in my day to find themselves in *Blackwood* and old Mr. William Blackwood, who later became a good friend of mine, prided himself on trying to pick out good work by unknown authors and 'to give it a show. . . .'"⁷ Though his estimate concerning the ambition of *all* young writers is doubtless exaggerated, Clifford does convey the sense of pleasure and achievement a new writer experienced at being accepted by the magazine. This sense is amply borne out in these letters. Conrad once used the word *hospitality* to describe Blackwood's

⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁶ Letter of 18 July 1900, below.

⁷ Clifford, 5.

ability at making authors feel as if admission to the pages of *Maga* were tantamount to admission into an old club. This club-like atmosphere is obvious from the beginning. "I hope you will like the company your first contribution to old *Maga* is in."⁸ Conrad showed his liking by commenting from time to time on the contributions of various members, always—or nearly always—with that deference which seemed to befit his own election to membership within the charmed circle. When he felt secure within that circle, he tried to draw his friends Garnett and Galsworthy into it. "*If Blackwood's take to me I want no better luck,*"⁹ Galsworthy had said, and Conrad italicized the statement for emphasis.

Ideally speaking, acquaintance within the pages of the magazine was not enough. The bond of friendship between Conrad and Hugh Clifford was in part a literary bond: they had shared the pages of *Blackwood's* together. If the opportunity presented itself, William Blackwood tried to make his authors known personally. When, for example, F. C. Constable wrote to him of his enthusiasm for Conrad, Blackwood passed his letter along, urging Conrad to strike up a correspondence with this gentleman who lived in a fine old Elizabethan house near Bristol and there composed erratic novels. The attempt failed, but the gesture is characteristic of the warm friendliness of the man. This warmth extended even to business relationships. Everything might be precise in a contract but the interpretation of it was relaxed. "We can square up when the copy is completed and we can tell the exact length,"¹⁰ he writes several times. When the day of reckoning came, the squaring up was apt to be casual. For this reason, and for many others, it is hardly a wonder that Blackwood was the first editor to make Conrad feel as if his work were prized.

II

The letters to Blackwood and to Meldrum do not alter significantly the account of Conrad's career already available in

⁸ Letter of 28 October 1897, below.

⁹ Letter of 18 December 1900, below.

¹⁰ Letter of 13 February 1900, below.

published documents. They do place a new emphasis, however, on this particular segment of time in that career and dramatize its extreme complexity. Perhaps the basic fact is that Conrad was overextended in his work. He was committed to Heinemann for a novel called *The Rescue* before Blackwood accepted "Karain." By March 1898, McClure of New York had advanced him £250 for the American serial rights on the novel, but Conrad found to his chagrin that he could neither finish nor stop exhausting his energies and spirit over it. When, in late August of the same year, Clement Shorter, who had bought the English serial rights, threatened on less than a month's notice to begin running the unfinished story in the *Illustrated London News*, Conrad was in a panic: "I thought I had months before me and am caught. . . . I am honour bound to finish the story to time."¹¹ In a recent book Mr. Thomas Moser has developed the thesis that Conrad's inability to complete this story arose from an uncongenial attitude towards love—and *The Rescue* was his first attempt at telling a love story. Conrad himself saw the reason for his bafflement in less Freudian terms. In a letter to Meldrum he describes his predicament as a conflict between his imagination and his will. His creative impulse was crossed by the doubt of his own adequacy. He explains how

whole paragraphs, whole pages, whole chapters pass through my mind. Everything is there: descriptions, dialogue, reflexion, everything, everything but the belief, the conviction, the only thing needed to make me put pen to paper.¹²

For several years, Conrad was to struggle over this book. He finished three parts—the typescript in the British Museum runs to about 500 pages. Then he admitted his defeat, only to rewrite the story late in life and deny that *The Rescue* had ever given him any serious trouble. As these letters—and others—make abundantly clear, Conrad's memory must have failed him on this point. What they do not reveal, except by implication, is the effect which this experience had upon him.

¹¹ Letter of 26 August 1898, Aubry, I, 145.

¹² Letter of 10 August 1898, below.

It seems safe to say, however, that this failure slowed Conrad down in his work for Blackwood and not infrequently led him to despair not only of *The Rescue* but of himself as well.

From the stalemate over *The Rescue* arose still another engagement, the promise, about July 1899, to furnish Heine-mann with a volume—later to appear as *Typhoon and Other Stories*. Nor was this gesture of consolation and appeasement all. Indeed, the previous year, Conrad had taken the initiative in striking a bargain with Ford Madox Hueffer to collaborate with him in writing novels. Soon the two issued a cheerful statement about the more important of their projected stories, *Seraphina*, later called *Romance*. If not “absolutely finished” by July 1899, they said, it would be “greatly advanced” by that time.¹³

Thus Conrad was attempting to serve three masters: Heine-mann, Hueffer, and Blackwood. By June 1898 Blackwood had dispatched Meldrum to Pent Farm to propose that Conrad sign a contract for a volume, *Three Tales of Land and Sea*. For a time all went well enough with this promised volume, though nothing went according to plan. Nevertheless, one good unfinished volume seemed to call for yet another. Blackwood was so pleased with “Youth” and “Heart of Darkness” that he suggested a second volume—August 1899—before Conrad had delivered the MS of the first one. Conrad was well content with this prospect of an extended future with Blackwood. When Algernon Methuen, the publisher, sounded him out about the possibility of his writing a novel for him, Conrad refused to be lured away from Blackwood—and, for that matter, from Heine-mann, too. “Apart from very friendly relations,” he wrote, “*Blackwood’s* is the only periodical *always* open to me—and is the only one for which I care to work.”¹⁴ Care as he might, however, Conrad did not finish the first volume of stories until late 1902.

The reason for this long delay was that “Jim: a Sketch,” originally conceived of as the third short story for the *Youth*

¹³ Keating, 131-132.

¹⁴ Letter of 25 May 1899, Aubry, I, 277.

volume, grew into a novel. These letters reveal for the first time Conrad's prolonged effort over it, albeit they show little of William Blackwood's consternation at seeing a "sketch" finally run into fourteen instalments in *Maga*. *Lord Jim* was finished in July 1900, and was issued as a book in the autumn of that year. In the meantime "Youth" and "Heart of Darkness" had been set up in type—in anticipation of Conrad's writing a third story to fill the volume. Blackwood naturally expected the gap to be filled immediately. Conrad, too, vaguely spoke of filling it, but he suddenly and without explanation to Blackwood veered in another direction on his zigzag course.

Owing to his futile efforts over *The Rescue* and to his struggle over *Lord Jim*, Conrad discovered by July 1900 that his promises to Heinemann and to Hueffer were long past fulfilment. Moreover, these commitments had fallen due at about the same time. From July 1900 until March 1902, therefore, he took an unannounced leave of absence from Blackwood. During this time he completed the *Typhoon* volume for Heinemann and brought to a conclusion his collaboration with Hueffer. When he returned from his truancy to complete the *Youth* volume, he could well ask Meldrum: "Do you think Mr B'wood is in any way offended or annoyed. He need not be. One does what one can."¹⁵

III

If the multiplicity of Conrad's writing engagements is perhaps the first impression that these letters make upon a reader, the intricacy of his private life is the second. The two—writer and man—are so closely related as to be almost inseparable. Conrad's precarious financial situation as a man drove him to his heroic efforts as a writer. To understand the extent of his heroism we should recall his isolation in a strange land and his digging the language which he chose to use out of a foreign quarry. As late as 1907, after composing in English for almost twenty years, he confessed to a friend in Brussels, "And English, is, too, still a foreign language to me, requiring an immense effort

¹⁵ Letter of 7 January 1902, below.

for me to handle.”¹⁶ This immense effort, moreover, was complicated by his tendency to dream a novel rather than to write it. Since for him writing was by definition the expression of a temperament, he frequently found himself subjected to the dictates of his own sensibility. As a sailor, he had followed an orderly life aboard ship; as an artist, he found that commitment to a daily routine frequently produced nothing. However, in spite of everything—his struggles with a foreign language and with his temperament—he was determined to succeed financially—as, very early in his writing career, he had said he would do. This determination, as is well known, bore fruit in 1912. Through all these discouraging years, neither Conrad nor his publishers had profited from any of his books. It was only when James Gordon Bennett, introduced to Conrad’s works by Hugh Clifford, serialized the novel *Chance* in the New York *Herald* that he began to realize his ambition. I mention this late turn in Conrad’s fortunes, however, solely for the sake of contrasting it with his early perplexities, on which these letters throw some additional light.

Since his trip to the Congo in 1890, Conrad had been in poor health. He suffered intermittently from gout, from neurasthenia, from nervous exhaustion. His handling of his personal finances was erratic. He shows admirable skill in drawing up a contract or in other ways “plotting against the lack of money,”¹⁷ as Galsworthy said of him, but little or no skill in planning a budget and keeping within it. Money, like time, escaped his clutch. Here, again, the contrast between sailor and artist may be fruitful. As a sailor Conrad had earned his board and keep and whatever money he made he saved or spent as he liked. As a writer he still had in him, he told Blackwood, “some of that unreasonable Jack ashore spirit and not a little of that truly Polish hopefulness which nothing neither nationally or individually has every justified.”¹⁸ This hopefulness had to keep pace

¹⁶ Gee and Sturm, 108. Letter of 5 January 1907.

¹⁷ John Galsworthy, “Reminiscences of Conrad,” *Castles in Spain* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1927), 111.

¹⁸ Letter of 24 May 1901, below.

with his desperate insecurity. Cut off from other means of support, he was largely dependent on the good will of publishers to advance him funds against promised work or on the good will of friends to make him loans against an uncertain future. In March 1896, shortly after the publication of his second novel, he married Miss Jessie George, the dowerless daughter of a bookseller. It is uncertain whether in the summer of that year he lost the modest savings—originally about £350—which his friend Adolf P. Krieger had invested for him.¹⁹ His first son, Borys, was born in January 1898. Within a few months Conrad also assumed the responsibility for the care and education of his wife's two orphaned nieces.

A man ridden by many anxieties, Conrad was troubled chiefly during this period by the loss of the friendship of the aforementioned Adolf P. Krieger,²⁰ to whom he owed the sum of about £180. The date of this loan is uncertain. Meldrum's statement in February 1899—"some two or three years ago"²¹—suggests the year of Conrad's marriage, 1896, as a possibility. Its purpose was to help launch him on his writing career. Conrad had met Krieger in 1883. Krieger had been instrumental in obtaining his Congo command for him; he had introduced him at the German hospital in London when he returned ill from that command; together with G. F. W. Hope, Conrad's earliest English friend, he had found him employment as manager of a Thames-side warehouse in 1891. The rift in Krieger's friendship first appears in a letter of December 1897, in which Conrad mourns the loss of his friend, attributes that loss to Krieger's being driven by some kind of compulsion, and hints darkly at the loan. "There are circumstances," he told Garnett, "which make the event a manifold torment."²²

¹⁹ To Garnett, 22 July 1896 (Garnett, 42): "I have had a lot of worries. A man I love much [Krieger] had been unfortunate in affairs and I also lost pretty well all that remained." To Meldrum, [10 February 1899], below: "Their business which he started 14 years ago with my money is very good—perfectly sound."

²⁰ Garnett identifies the lost friend as one "to whom Conrad had dedicated one of his books" (Garnett, 107, footnote). That is, *Tales of Unrest*.

²¹ Letter of 9 February 1899, below.

²² Letter of 5 December 1897, Garnett, 108.

Krieger's uncanny timing in asking for the repayment of the loan was surely part of that torment. One of these dramatic moments coincided with Conrad's first recognition as a writer—aside, of course, from reviews—the award of fifty guineas by *The Academy* on 14 January 1899 for his first collection of short stories, *Tales of Unrest*. In an obvious attempt to placate Krieger, he had dedicated this book, “for the sake of old days,” to him. Meldrum says in reporting the incident to Blackwood: “Conrad had nothing but the £50 cheque, scarce out of its envelope; he endorsed it, and posted it immediately to his friend, thankful that Fate should have put it into his power to relieve himself of some of the anxiety of owing money to a man distressingly in need of it.”²³ The coincidence loses some of its edge, however, when we recall the fact that Conrad had known of the forthcoming award since the previous September. Moreover, he was not a man to keep a secret, either about good fortune or bad. It seems entirely plausible, therefore, to assume that he had told his friend Hope—even his old friend Krieger—of this stroke of good fortune long before the arrival of the award itself. Be that as it may, when William Blackwood heard the news of Conrad's embarrassment, he sent him a check for £60, fifty of which he dispatched to Krieger. That sum, together with the prize money from *The Academy*, left a remainder of about £80.²⁴

Within a period of less than a month—from the middle of January until mid-February 1899—Krieger wrote Conrad four times, imploring him for aid. Conrad had sent him £100, but that was not enough. He began to think of some means of escape from this constant harrassment. He was averse to mortgaging his future, yet, as he told Meldrum, “I must do it in some way because [with] this idiotic affair bothering me I cannot sleep.”²⁵ Almost two years later, in December 1900, Conrad

²³ Letter of 9 February 1899, below.

²⁴ “I did send him the £50 of the Academy and I owe him <100> 130 yet.” Letter of [10 February 1899], below. The fifty pounds from Blackwood would have reduced the larger of these figures to £80.

²⁵ Letter of [10 February 1899], below.

returned to the idea: he would take out an insurance policy for £1000 and borrow the sum of £250 against it. He would ask Blackwood, who had just published *Lord Jim*, to be one of two sureties guaranteeing the loan. The purpose of the loan, as he explained it, was to enable him to clear up generally his financial situation and, in particular, "to discharge a certain obligation which weighs on me the more, because it cannot be legally enforced." This was, of course, the obligation to Krieger. What follows seems almost too remarkable for belief. Before he could post his letter to Blackwood, Conrad received a "distressing communication," which prompted him to add a postscript, requesting an immediate personal loan of £50. It was to be "repaid as soon as my loan from the Insurance Co is negotiated." This personal loan would be anticipating one of the purposes for which the insurance loan was intended. "It is not a fresh liability," Conrad is careful to explain. "Only *time* in this case is of the greatest importance. You may imagine how pressing the case must be to prod me into such an appeal."²⁶ The frantic Krieger had returned for help. Blackwood responded with his usual alacrity, agreeing to serve as surety on the insurance loan and sending the £50 as requested. But Conrad failed to pay back the loan. This failure was to complicate greatly his relationship with the house as we shall see in due course.

It was about the time when *Lord Jim* was published in the autumn of 1900—the same time, roughly, when Conrad was asking Blackwood to serve as his surety and to lend him £50—that he formed a partnership with James B. Pinker, the literary agent. Pinker had first approached Conrad in August 1899, just at a time when he was growing restive under Blackwood's requirement that anything appearing in *Maga* must be published in book form by the firm. Conrad was finding this arrangement irksome at that moment because he had promised Heinemann, just six weeks or so previously, a book of stories. The problem of arranging for the serialization of these stories was of course

²⁶ Letter of 14 December 1900, below.

a ready-made one for an agent. By October 1900 the understanding between the two seems to have matured so fully that Pinker, from time to time, was advancing Conrad money on demand.²⁷ By the next year, he was advancing £4 a thousand words "on my stuff on delivery" and had managed to receive an even better price than that for two of his short stories, "Amy Foster" and "Tomorrow." All the while Conrad had barred Pinker from his dealings with Blackwood, for *Maga*, as he told Meldrum, was his "first and only Love!"²⁸ In January 1902, however, he warned George Blackwood, William's young nephew, that Pinker would be assuming responsibility for his affairs as soon as they had been set in order.

The affairs were in great disorder. Conrad had reached a state of crisis which he had not foreseen. A year previously he had negotiated the insurance loan in the hope of winning peace from his creditors, but the insurance company, he discovered, was a still more insistent creditor: the semiannual payments of about £40—amortization, interest, premium—fell due with machine-like regularity. His banker William Watson, the second of his sureties, had taken care of the first payment. Conrad had met only the amortization of £25 due in June 1901, but paying the instalment of 1 January 1902 was quite beyond his powers. He asked the insurance company for an extension of time, and it was granted. The note of deep anxiety which the thought of Krieger had always invoked reappears in his letters. He told Meldrum that he was "in a worry that almost drives me out of my mind."²⁹ To Pinker he bared his almost suicidal despair: "Death would be the best thing. It would pay off all my debts and there would be no question of MS. Really if one hadn't wife and child I don't know. There are some pressing bills. Damn."³⁰ Six weeks later he was in a fright lest his guarantors, Blackwood and

²⁷ "I am writing by this post to P[inker] telling him to send me 20 pounds which I shall forward to you at once as soon as I get the cheque." Letter to Cunningham Graham, 10 October 1900. MS: Dartmouth College Library.

²⁸ Letter of 7 January 1902, below.

²⁹ Letter of 7 January 1902, below.

³⁰ Letter to Pinker, 6 January 1902. MS: Mr. John D. Gordan.

Watson, would be called upon to make good their sureties. That prospect was appalling: "I don't want B'wood to have to pay—just because he is a most likely publisher for me." He spelled out in detail his most intimate fears: "I have a positive dread of the Insur: Comp: coming down on my sureties. If once B'wood is involved in that paying off business it means unending slavery for me. I say this without reflecting on his character at all. He is very friendly and helpful—but you know how it is between author and publisher."³¹

In the meantime Conrad had taken up with George Blackwood the problem of writing the third story for the *Youth* volume, which by January 1902 had been in proof for over two years. He intimated that £4 a thousand words would be an agreeable price for it. The hint was eloquent of Conrad's new estimate of his worth, thanks to Pinker, but it challenged George Blackwood to search the contract. In it, he found, Conrad had himself proposed to furnish the story at the original rate of £2/10. The occasion gave him an opportunity to mention the debt of £50, now over a year old. As for the rate of £2/10, Meldrum regretted that Conrad had made an issue of a question which had been settled long ago. As for the second, the £50 debt, Meldrum had a plan which, as early as February 1902, had taken Conrad's desperate fancy: the debt would give an opening for a further advance, the two to be consolidated and secured on copyrights. This further advance was intended, it would appear, to settle the insurance loan once and for all. When the scheme was finally perfected, Conrad was to ask for a cash payment of £50 and a loan of £300 bearing interest at 5 per cent. In exchange he was to give over the copyright on *Lord Jim* and that on the forthcoming volume of stories. Pinker, of course, was told of the plan. "The wisdom of that step," Conrad explained, "I do not defend. It is a matter of necessity about which I am extremely anxious. As you may imagine I am almost brokenhearted about it too."³²

³¹ Letter to Pinker, 25 February 1902. MS: Mr. John D. Gordan.

³² Letter to Pinker, 23 March 1902. MS: Mr. John D. Gordan.

During the winter and spring of 1902 William Blackwood had been in Sicily. As a consequence of this absence, Conrad could not confer with him about this latest plan until his return to London. When Conrad asked for an interview, he was careful to relieve Blackwood of his suretyship, though how he managed to do so is not as yet evident. The interview took place at Morley's Hotel on the morning of 31 May. Since Blackwood on all previous occasions had never once refused him, Conrad had not imagined for a moment that there would be any difficulty in the matter. This miscalculation brought affairs between them suddenly to a climax. William Blackwood balked at the notion of taking over the copyrights. He seized the opportunity, moreover, to deal in some plain speaking: "He was very kind but told me plainly that I was a loss to the Firm. Thats hard enough to hear at any time."³³ Conrad returned to Pent Farm and wrote Blackwood a moving defense of himself—his character and career, his ideals in art and his hopes for the future. Three days later Blackwood, who had by now received information concerning the sales of *Lord Jim*, delivered a final judgment. He rejected the scheme because it would be advantageous neither to the house nor to Conrad: "If you will allow me to say so, it is still less one, in my opinion, which in the long run would turn out to be good for yourself."³⁴

The dismal sequel to the interview came three weeks later, on the evening of 23 June—the destruction by fire of "The End of the Tether," the third story for the *Youth* volume, just that day completed. Conrad had always found working for the magazine arduous. In a moment of weariness he once exclaimed, "If one only could do without serial publication!"³⁵ Only "Karain," "Youth," and two other short pieces came to the editor's hands complete and ready for the printer. "Heart of Darkness" was finished just as the first instalment appeared. With but four instalments ready, Blackwood began to serialize *Lord Jim*, as uncertain of the outcome as the author himself.

³³ Letter of 31 May 1902, below.

³⁴ Letter of 3 June 1902, below.

³⁵ Letter of 3 April 1900, below.

Once a story was caught within the inexorable machinery of the magazine, Conrad was trapped. This fact made his experience with "The End of the Tether" particularly cruel—"absolutely nightmarish," he said. The first part of this story was already in type, the remaining instalments written, when the lamp on his work table exploded. After beating out the flames, Conrad could salvage only four entire pages and the broken fragments of a dozen more. This "little private disaster,"³⁶ as he first called it, was neither little nor did it remain private for long. It brought aid from an unexpected quarter, the Royal Literary Fund, an organization which since 1791 had been quietly assuming the function of the literary patron in England. Conrad had got word of his disaster immediately to Hugh Clifford, who, in turn, saw Edmund Gosse, a member of the committee for the Fund.³⁷ Within three days, Gosse had written Henry James, asking him to sponsor the formal application for aid to the Fund.³⁸ The following paragraph is from James's covering letter, dated 26 June:

I lose not an hour in responding to your request about Conrad—whom I had not in the least known to be in the state you mention. It horrifies me more than I can say, and I applaud to the echo your attempt to do something for him. Do let me know what may result from it. *May* my letter enclosed, and which I've endeavoured to make warm yet discreet, weigh in the scale! It is at least wholly sincere. Heaven speed your work!—And what a drama; altogether the circumjacent crash of things. . . .³⁹

By 12 July, Clifford wrote William Blackwood that their friend Conrad had been granted the sum of £300 as a token of the Fund's admiration for his literary work.

The personal loan of £50 remained to plague the Blackwoods and Conrad for several years. Six months after receiving Krieger's note of distress, Conrad apologized in an oblique man-

³⁶ Letter of 26 June 1902, below.

³⁷ Clifford to Blackwood, 6 August 1902: "I mentioned to him [Gosse] that I had heard on good authority that poor Conrad was in the doldrums."

³⁸ See Appendix C.

³⁹ MS: British Museum, Ashley 4792. Published by permission of Mr. William James.

ner for the circumstances under which he had made his heart-rending appeal. Ever since that time he had felt "bitterly ashamed" of having incurred this obligation "with every appearance of false pretences." He had failed to pay back the money, he says in an offhand way, because "I've taken up certain obligations which are heavier than I expected."⁴⁰ In an equally offhand way, Blackwood, in August 1901, proposed his writing "a light essay now and then" on some literary or artistic subject, but Conrad never seized upon this idea as a means of clearing the books.

When George Blackwood first reminded him of this debt in February 1902, Conrad was in the midst of his heavy anxiety over the insurance loan and protested his inability to liquidate it at that moment. Apologies ceased and distressing communications from Adolf P. Krieger were forgot as Pinker assumed responsibility for Conrad's affairs. The question became strictly impersonal. George Blackwood called Pinker's attention to the loan on 21 June 1904. As Conrad was approaching the end of his most ambitious work, *Nostramo*, by August of this year, Pinker felt free to offer a plan: Conrad would write two short stories for *Maga*. By March 1905, however, George Blackwood had heard nothing of them and said so. In May, Pinker sent "Her Captivity," a 4000-word sketch later to be incorporated in *The Mirror of the Sea*, on which William Blackwood allowed a credit of thirteen pounds. Blackwood expressed disappointment over the piece; and Conrad, over the fee. Pinker conveyed Conrad's expectations for a higher fee when forwarding "Initiation" in September. The credit of £22—the sketch ran to thirteen pages in the magazine—left a remainder due of fifteen. In January 1906 Pinker anticipated sending another sketch or story in order finally to clear up the account. This third and final story was forthcoming in April. William Blackwood, however, felt compelled to reject "The Brute: A Piece of Invective" because its idea seemed to him reminiscent of a

⁴⁰ Letter of 24 May 1901, below.

story he had recently published. Nevertheless, he hoped for "another story from Mr Conrad before very long."⁴¹

In a letter to Alfred A. Knopf, then a young man in the office of Doubleday, Page, and Company, Conrad distinguishes between two methods in the publishing business: "The first is speculative. A book is a venture. Hit or miss. To a certain extent it must be so. But here and there a writer must be taken up as an investment. An investment must be attended to, it must be nursed—if one believes in it."⁴² The remark is apt, but it hardly needs laboring: William Blackwood had taken up Conrad as an investment; he had nursed that investment through one of Conrad's most bewildering but fruitful periods. Nor had Conrad missed the point. "I feel sure," says Meldrum to Blackwood, "he considers himself bound to you in his work."⁴³ These words were written in February 1899, when Conrad was finishing "*Heart of Darkness*." Even as late as the winter of 1902, however, he himself envisioned a future with Blackwood. Pinker was to give Blackwood the first refusal of any of his work—indeed, Conrad thought of Blackwood as possibly his sole publisher for the future.

Ironically, just at the time when Conrad was producing nothing for Blackwood, he began to ask him for special favors—a suretyship, a personal loan. His growing dependence upon Blackwood as a deliverer from his great and perplexing worries was further emphasized by his request for a loan against copyrights. Consider Blackwood's position: through the years he had responded to every suggestion Meldrum had given him about Conrad's needs; unprompted, he himself at times had anticipated those needs; he had never declined Conrad any of his direct requests. To all appearances Conrad had adopted a blithe, if not callous, attitude towards the repayment of the loan. Only four days before the interview in London on 31 May 1902, Conrad had relieved Blackwood of the suretyship. The first instalment of "*The End of the Tether*," to be sure, was in hand, but the

⁴¹ Letter of 25 April 1906, below.

⁴² Letter of 20 July 1913, Aubry, II, 147.

⁴³ Letter of 9 February 1899, below.

copyright on the *Youth* volume, from a purely practical view, did not as yet exist. Thus at the interview, Blackwood was thrown on the defensive. He said what any other of Conrad's publishers at this time would undoubtedly have said if cornered: he was a loss to the firm. "Thats hard enough to hear at any time." Conrad was wounded. His anxieties had humiliated him. The sting of that humiliation is to be found in his splendid defense of himself, especially in his having staked everything on this final request. It was to be a test of Blackwood's faith, or lack of faith, in his future. In his dramatization of this point, Conrad has been proved wrong by time. Blackwood's commonsensical and honest refusal, though chilling at the moment, was a form of rescue. In saving Conrad from a desperate gamble, he had performed his last, and best, act of kindness for him.

As Conrad saw it, Blackwood had failed to show in this emergency the right kind of faith in him. As Blackwood saw it in at least one particular, Conrad in like manner had played him false. "I do think also that he resented a bit my going to Pinker."⁴⁴ Pinker, the representative figure in the new era of literary salesmanship, was indeed an intruder from the point of view of both Blackwood and Conrad. The very existence of Conrad's letters to his publisher implies an instinctive desire for a personal relationship, which, given Conrad's isolation and his yearning for approval, was for a while a necessity with him. Long before Pinker had approached him, in fact, before this correspondence begins, Conrad had been tempted to let an agent manage his business for him. And in the very month "Karain" appeared, he twice exclaimed to Garnett, apropos of *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, "I hope I've done with the *selling* business for life."⁴⁵ The fact that he did not give it up at that time may indicate, of course, several things—inefficiency, amateurism—but surely it also points towards a desire to extend his acquaintance in the literary world, especially when a friendship with the

⁴⁴ Letter of 31 May 1902, below.

⁴⁵ Garnett, 104.

editor of a famous journal was in prospect. Blackwood, for his part, also had sought to develop a personal connection, for this had been the tradition of the house from its beginning. Unwittingly, Pinker had helped to drive a wedge between the two. How clean the break had been is apparent in a letter, spiced with Conrad's gay banter, written ten days after the conference. "Why do you introduce the name of Pinker into your letter?" he asks Garnett. "It is almost indelicate on your part. The times indeed are changed—and all my art has become artfulness in exploiting agents and publishers."⁴⁶ The artfulness as seen in his attempt to evade the contract which he himself had written or that as displayed at the interview may have seemed misplaced to the Blackwoods, but the times indeed had changed: Pinker was gradually to assume the responsibilities that once William Blackwood—and others—had shouldered.⁴⁷

IV

The estrangement was final, though Conrad was to feel at times a sense of loss. As early as 1908, a note of wistfulness—at least, implied—creeps into a remark concerning a publisher for *Under Western Eyes*. "And perhaps," he says, "no magazine will touch it. *Blackwood's*, since the Old Man has retired, do not much care for my work."⁴⁸ The contrast between William Blackwood and his successor George is pointed, for uncle and nephew were temperamentally very different. The Old Man, blessed with insight and a gift for patience, had been tolerant of Conrad's unpredictable ways and financial dependence. He had been aware of certain imponderables in the writer's craft and was willing to make allowances for them. "I have always looked upon the writing of fiction," he once told Conrad, "as something not to be bounded altogether by time or space notwithstanding my old friend Anthony Trollope who went

⁴⁶ Letter of 10 June 1902, Garnett, 183.

⁴⁷ By 6 January 1908, Conrad owed Pinker the sum of £1,572. By May 1914 the debt was so large that even the proceeds from *Chance*, Conrad's first and greatest financial success, were insufficient to clear it entirely. Aubry, II, 66, 154.

⁴⁸ Letter of 6 January 1908, Aubry, II, 65.

to his desk as a shoemaker goes to his last."⁴⁹ George Blackwood, on the other hand, was primarily a fine printer and businessman. An efficient person himself, he not unnaturally expected efficiency in others. In his view, no doubt, his uncle's easy-going toleration had been a luxury in which the firm could no longer indulge. And Conrad had been one of his uncle's indulgences, a brilliant writer, to be sure, but exasperating and unprofitable.

With the passage of years, Conrad tended to look back upon his experience with *Blackwood's* as having been the happiest of his writing career. Garnett, he recollected vividly in 1911, had turned him to this journal of Empire and the outposts of civilization, and that judgment had been positively inspired. It had been inspired because Conrad, a middle-class writer, had found an audience congenial to his talents, a public that he had discovered nowhere else—"yet the one to catch on best to my stuff."⁵⁰ Some of the prefaces composed towards the end of his career for the collected edition of his works gave him the opportunity to acknowledge his indebtedness to William Blackwood himself, the only one of his several publishers whom he officially recognized. "Karain," he said, was memorable solely because it had brought him the personal acquaintance of the editor of *Maga* and had put him in touch with his "encouraging and helpful kindness."⁵¹

In the agreeable mood of reminiscence, Conrad related Blackwood directly to the development of *Lord Jim*. In the Preface to that volume, he tells how after writing a few pages he laid the MS aside in a drawer and did not take it out again until "the late Mr. William Blackwood suggested I give something again to his magazine." It was only then, he continues, that he perceived the possibility of expanding the initial episode, that of the pilgrim ship, into "a free and wandering tale."⁵² This account stresses Conrad's immediate perception of the possi-

⁴⁹ See letter of 8 September 1898, below.

⁵⁰ Letter of 29 July 1911, Garnett, 246.

⁵¹ Preface to *Youth*, *Prefaces*, 71.

⁵² Preface to *Lord Jim*, *ibid.*, 66.

bilities of the story; the letters imply his gradual discovery of them. Spurred on by Blackwood's suggestion in the late winter of 1899, Conrad took up the story again—after, apparently, having stowed it away the previous autumn—but for months thereafter he continued to think of it as a short story or at most as a novella,—as something ever more about to be completed soon. Even as late as May 1900, when the end was indeed in sight, Conrad seems to have been positively irritated when Blackwood announced that the free and wandering tale had outgrown the space originally provided for it in *Three Tales* and would have to appear as a separate volume. It had not been planned to stand alone, he protested mildly. It was to have been a part of a homogeneous book. "Heart of Darkness" had been intended as a foil to it; "Youth" was supposed to sound the "note."⁵³

A confusion between cause and effect exists in the official account of how "Heart of Darkness" came to be written. According to the letters, Conrad informed Blackwood in December 1898 of his being prepared to begin this story. Three weeks later, somewhat tardily, Blackwood invited him to contribute to the Thousandth Number of *Maga*, February, 1899. Clearly, Conrad's promise of the story prompted Blackwood's invitation, not the invitation, the story. The Preface to the *Rescue*, however, makes it appear that the invitation moved Conrad to compose the story—the story on which he had already been at work for ten days or more before the invitation arrived. The *Rescue*, he says, could be neglected (and Mr. William Heinemann, one may infer, could be kept waiting for it), but Mr. William Blackwood and "the venerable *Maga* at her patriarchial age of 1000 numbers could not be kept waiting."⁵⁴ This discrepancy between fact and fiction, slight as it is, throws into relief the William Blackwood of Conrad's memory. He becomes an editor whose merest wish was a mandate that Conrad could not deny, even as he was also a benevolent old gentleman who found it painful to refuse Conrad any of his desires.

⁵³ Letter of 19 May 1900, above.

⁵⁴ Preface to *The Rescue*, *Ibid.*, 188.

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

I have expanded half a dozen of Conrad's abbreviations.

Wherever possible I have used brackets to fill out Conrad's misspelled words. Otherwise I have used the inevitable *sic*. There are, however, one or two exceptions, the chief one being the word *length*, which Conrad usually though not invariably spelled *lenght*. As a Pole, he seems to have had difficulty with the *th* sound in English: *lenght*, *strenght*, *trough-out*.

I have tried to render Conrad's capitalization accurately, though let me hasten to add that my rendering is frequently a matter of opinion. His use of the letter *y*—especially in the personal pronoun *you*—is so bizarre that, most reluctantly, I have decided to spell this word in lower case, it being well nigh impossible to determine when Conrad, following some Continental usage, meant *You* or *you*.

Conrad's punctuation remains as he used it.

The headings to the letters have been placed in one line with vertical rules to indicate the original spacing. Engraved headings have been set in capitals and small capitals, manuscript headings in upper and lower case.

The complimentary close to the letters has been placed in a single line wherever space could be saved by so doing.

I refer only to the dates of letters, not to the page numbers on which they appear.

I have tried to be brief in the footnotes.

ABBREVIATIONS

[]	Editor's interpolations
< >	Words overscored
Aubry	<i>Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters</i> by G. Jean-Aubry. London: William Heinemann, 2 vols., 1927.
<i>Blackwood's</i>	<i>Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine</i> .
<i>The Bookman</i>	"The Letters of Joseph Conrad to Stephen and Cora Crane," edited by Carl Bohnenberger and Norman Mitchell Hill. <i>The Bookman</i> , 69 (1929), 225-235; 367-374.
Clifford	"A Talk on Joseph Conrad and his Work" by Sir Hugh Clifford, G. C. M. G., G. B. E. Ceylon: The English Association, February, 1927
Garnett	<i>Letters from Conrad 1895 to 1924</i> . Edited with Introduction and Notes by Edward Garnett. London: The Nonsuch Press, n. d.
Gee and Sturm	<i>Letters of Joseph Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska 1890-1920</i> . Translated from the French and Edited With an Introduction, Notes and Appendices by John A. Gee and Paul J. Sturm. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940.
Goldring	<i>The Last Pre-Raphaelite: A Record of the Life and Writings of Ford Madox Ford</i> by Douglas Goldring. London: Macdonald and Co., Ltd., 1948.
Gordan	<i>Joseph Conrad: The Making of a Novelist</i> by John Dozier Gordan. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941.
Keating	<i>A Conrad Memorial Library: The Collection of George</i>

T. Keating. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran, and Co., 1929.

Prefaces *Conrad's Prefaces to His Works.* With an introductory essay by Edward Garnett and a Biographical note on his father by David Garnett. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1937.

Quinn *The Library of John Quinn*, Part One [A-C], New York: The Anderson Galleries, 1923.

Wise *A Bibliography of the Writings of Joseph Conrad, 1895-1920*, by T. J. Wise. London: Privately Printed, 1920.

I hope that this letter will find its place in that memoir which one or two of my young faithfuls have promised to offer to my 'manes'.

—CONRAD TO BLACKWOOD, 31 MAY 1902

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 6 May 1897*]

Mr Fisher Unwin wrote the other day asking if we would look at a story by Joseph Conrad for *Maga* which he is to publish later in a volume. I replied in the name of the firm that the Editor would. It came to-day and I posted it to you to-night.¹ . . . Conrad is a capital man, and this is a capital story—extremely strong and good on the literary side. It is long, 11,000 words at most, but I strongly advise its acceptance. I hope it will strike you in the same light. It may bring us into touch with Conrad himself. *If* you accept it, I would suggest that you make out the cheque when the time comes for that in Joseph Conrad's name, and not in Unwin's although he may re-

¹ Conrad had sent "Karain" to Unwin, who was acting as his agent, on 14 April 1897. Against Unwin's advice, Conrad refused Blackwood's first offer and set a price of £40 on the story. Blackwood agreed by 17 July. Garnett, 81, 85-86. Nine weeks—not three as in *Aubry*, I, 296—elapsed between Meldrum's dispatch of the story and Blackwood's final acceptance. For Garnett's original suggestion, see Garnett, xxviii-xxix, and Introductory Essay, xiv-xv.

quest that. He would charge Conrad 20% Commission² if he could for placing it, I haven't the slightest doubt. One of his authors told me that he charged 50% for the American rights of *his* book. . . .

² "I shall send it ["Karain"] to Unwin; ask him to place it (on 10% Com)." Letter of Sunday [Feb. 7. 1897]. Garnett, 73.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 15 May 1897*]

. . . Have you had time to read Joseph Conrad's story? I hope you like it, if you have. . . .

[*Conrad to William Blackwood and Sons*]

Ivy Walls Farm | Stanford-le-Hope | Essex. | 24th August 1897

Messrs: Wm Blackwood & Sons.

DEAR SIRs.

M^r Fisher Unwin has communicated to me at the time your letter accepting my story *Karain*, which, I understand, you intend to publish in October.

I write you direct now to give you my address—for the proofs; and at the same time I venture to ask whether you would do me the favour of sending these as early as is consistent with your perfect convenience. I make very few alterations, but I like to live for a bit with my work before passing it finally for the press. I am, dear Sirs, | Yours very obediently

JPH. CONRAD

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George St | Edinburgh. | 26th August 1897

MY DEAR SIR,

I had the pleasure of receiving your letter addressed to my firm this morning and thank you for communicating to me your present address. I was also very pleased to hear that you liked

to live for a bit with your work before passing it finally for Press. It will give me pleasure to have your M.S. set up without delay, and I hope on an early day next week to write you with the proof. If it is all the same to you I think it would suit my arrangements better to use "Karain" in the November number, rather than in October. You will let me know if this arrangement will suit.

Have you anything on the stocks in the form of a serial story? If you have, when would it be in a form to submit the M.S. to me with a view to running it through the Magazine.

Yours very truly,

(sig.) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD

Joseph Conrad, Esq

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

Ivy Walls Farm | Stanford-le-Hope | Essex. | 28th Augst
1897.

DEAR SIR.

Pray believe that I appreciate fully the friendly tone of your letter and your readiness to accede to my request in the matter of proofs. As to the month of publication I have only to say that I am made happy by the knowledge the story is to appear whole in the Nov^{er} number—for that is the inference I draw from your letter. Am I right?

Allow me to express the very real pleasure your inquiry as to a serial causes me—Not from commercial motives. But without enlarging further upon the state of my feelings I may say I have something "on the stocks". And, since you've had the kindness to broach the subject you'll permit me to reply at some length.

The story I have in hand is entitled *The Rescue: a Tale of Narrow Waters*.¹ I began it last year but after finishing Part 1st laid it aside to write some short stories—one of which

¹ Conrad first mentions this work in a letter of 23 March 1896, but gave up writing it, after completing the first part of about 26,000 words, on 14 August of the same year. Garnett, 24, 47.

(rather unexpectedly) developed itself into a longer work now appearing in the *New Review* and to be published by M^r Wm Heinemann in book form next Nov^{er}.² However through all these delays the *Rescue* did abide with me very persistently. Strictly speaking the MS is not yet in a form to be submitted to you; nevertheless, encouraged by the interest you are pleased to manifest in my work, I venture to suggest that you should allow me to send <it> you Part 1st—not, of course, for a decision or a promise of any kind but only to give you a view of the subject and the treatment.

If you would consent to look through it at your perfect leisure I would go on writing in the meantime, and by—say—Nov^{er} next the story may be advanced enough to show its quality unmistakably. In any case it would be finished by the end of Jan^{ry} 1898. I would also, with the part 1st send you a short statement—not of events—but of the idea to be worked out. And this would enable you in a measure to form an opinion as to whether I am going about it in a promising way—or otherwise.

The truth is I am very much preoccupied with the story. It'll be—apart from its subject—a deliberate attempt to get in some artistic effects of a graphic order—but I mustn't weary you.

As you've been good enough to promise me a letter with the proofs perhaps you would then say Yes or No to the above proposal, which, I trust, you will not consider a trespass upon your forbearance.

Believe me, dear Sir | Very faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

² *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus,'* finished 19 February 1897 (Quinn, 170), was published 2 December 1897. Keating, 31.

[William Blackwood to Conrad]

45 George St | Edinburgh. | 3rd Sept, 1897

MY DEAR SIR,

I have the pleasure of enclosing you proof of your excellent story "Karain" which, as it suits your other arrangements, I am glad to postpone until November. It was also a real pleasure to me to open a correspondence with one writer not purely from "commercial motives" and I was delighted to hear that you had something on the stocks which might develop into a serial story. If you will send me the first part of "The Rescue; A Tale of Narrow Waters", I shall be happy to read it, and let you know if I think from my perusal of it, if from its subject & treatment it is likely to suit the Magazine, and then later on you could send me as much as had been written to show its character and qualities unmistakably. You also said you could with Part I send me a short statement of how your idea would be worked out, which would be a further help to me in giving you an opinion.

Do not hesitate to write me fully whatever occurs to you in regard to either "Karain" or "The Rescue"; and from the little you have told me of the latter, my appetite and anxiety are whetted to see the first part without delay. In correcting proof of "Karain" do not hesitate to make whatever corrections you may feel are decided improvements to the story, as Maga likes her contributors to do their very best, and does not grudge expense in revision of proofs when that is conscientiously done.

Believe me, Yours very truly
(sigd) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD

Joseph Conrad Esq

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

Stanford le Hope. | Essex | Sept 4th 1897.

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Thanks for using the word "excellent" in connection with my story. It is consoling to know that your sympathetic insight,

undiscouraged by the imperfections of the accomplished task, can discern the aim—the unattainable aim—of the writer. I shall take a shameless advantage (if need be) of Maga's generosity in the matter of revision. But I don't think there will be much. A passage or two to brace up a little—and a word here and there to change.

I delayed sending you my acknowledgment for the Sep^{er} issue. I beg to do so now. The appreciation of Mrs Oliphant's work is just in the right note.¹ It is justice—and discriminating justice—rendered to that serene talent. I think she wrote too much (perhaps it's envy; to me it's simply unconceivable) but she was ever faithful to her artistic temperament—she always *expressed* herself. She was a *better artist* than George Elliot [*sic*]; and, at her best *immensely* superior to any living woman novelist I can call to mind. Harris (an old friend of mine—in his work) can write more than a bit.² Not to every one is given to be so graphic and so easy at the same time. Besides his point of view is most sympathetic to me. Blackmore is himself—of course.³ But professor Saintsbury's paper interested me most—a bit of fundamental criticism most cleverly expounded.⁴

I am delighted to hear you will look at the *Rescue*. I shall dispatch it very soon—but just now I am worried almost to extinction by a short story⁵ I've been trying to write for the last three months. It is an old man of the sea to me. I can't shake it off—but I am doing my best to murder it—I must say that for myself. Together with the typed MS I shall send you an explanatory document—concealing nothing and extenuating only very little. And I trust that continuing your friendly interest you will judge, and say *all* you think. I am, dear Mr. Blackwood, most faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD

¹ "Mrs. Oliphant as a Novelist," *Blackwood's*, 162 (1897), 305-319.

² Walter B. Harris (1866-1933), "During the Armistice: Impressions of the War," *ibid.*, 436-448.

³ Richard D. Blackmore (1825-1900), *Dariel: A Romance of Surrey*, *ibid.*, 348-374.

⁴ George Saintsbury (1845-1933), "The Two Tragedies—A Note," *ibid.*, 395-401.

⁵ "The Return." See letter of 5 November 1897, footnote, below.

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

[Stanford-le-Hope]

Wm Blackwood Esq^{re}

DEAR SIR.—This is the first part of the tale. I propose the title of *The Rescue*. instead of *Rescuer* as on the type written page. —The part contains about 26.000 words. The story is planned in 4 parts. Its length is to be 85-100 thousand words. (The last most likely).

—I ought to state at once that what there is of the story has been seen by Mr S. Pawling of the firm of Mr. Wm. Heinemann, when he came to see me here 3 months ago.¹ The firm proposed to publish the story in book form—a proposal which I of course gladly accepted, without binding myself to any specified time. It would never be before the winter season of 1898 <and> or perhaps, spring of 1899. So much in the way of details bearing upon business questions—and now as to the stuff itself.

—The situation 'per se' is not new. Consequently all the effect must be produced in the working out—in the manner of telling. This necessity from my point of view is fascinating. I am sure you will understand my feeling though you may differ with me in the view. On the other hand the situation is not prosaic. It is suitable for a romance. The human interest of the tale is in the contact of Lingard² the simple, masterful, imaginative adventurer with a type of civilized woman—a complex type. He is a man tenacious of purpose, enthusiastic in undertaking, faithful in friendship. He jeopardises the success of his plans first <for> to assure her safety and then absolutely sacrifices them to what he believes the necessary conditions of her happiness. He is t[h]roughout mistrusted by the whites whom he wishes to save; he is unwillingly forced into a contest with his Malay friends. Then when the rescue, for which he had sacrificed all the interests of his life, is accomplished, he has to face his reward—an inevitable separation. This episode of his life lifts him

¹ 11-12 June. Garnett, 84.

² Tom Lingard appears first in *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands*.

out of himself; I want to convey in the action of the story the stress and exaltation of the man under the influence of a sentiment which he hardly understands and yet which is real enough to make him as he goes on reckless of consequences. It is only at the very last that he is perfectly enlightened when the work of rescue and destruction is ended and nothing is left to him but to try and pick up as best he may the broken thread of his life. Lingard—not the woman—is the principal personage. That's why all the first part is given up to the presentation of his personality. It illustrates the method I intend to follow. I aim at stimulating vision in the reader. If after reading the *part 1st* you don't *see* my man then I've absolutely failed and must begin again—or leave the thing alone. Of course the paraphernalia of the story are hackneyed. The yacht, the shipwreck, the pirates, the coast—all this has been used times out of number; whether it has been done, that's another question. Be it as it may I think rightly or wrongly I can present it in a fresh way. At any rate as I wish to <give> obtain the effect of reality in my story and also wanted the woman—that kind of woman—there was no other way to bring her there but in the time-honoured yacht. Nothing impossible shall happen. I shall tell of some events I've seen, and also relate things I've heard. One or two men I've known—about others I've been told many interminable tales. The French Brig “Amitié” was in 1866 stranded on the coast and attacked by some vagabonds belonging to a certain Haji Saman. I had the story from the captain of the brig. In 1848 an Englishman called Wyndham had been living for many years with the Sultan of Sulu and was the general purveyor of arms and gunpowder. In 1850 or 51 he financed a very lively row in Celebes. He is mentioned in Dutch official documents as a great nuisance—which he, no doubt, was. I've heard several versions of his end (occurred in the sixties) all very lamentable. In the 70^{ies} Lingard had a great if occult influence with the Rajah of Bali. He was a meddler but very disinterested and was greatly respected by the natives. As late as 1888 arms have been landed on the coast of that island—that to my personal knowl-

edge. Thus facts can bear out my story but as I am writing fiction not secret history—facts don't matter.

I think you must have had enough of all this. I don't know whether I've given you any idea at all of what I want to do—of what I am likely to do. But pray believe me that nothing but my appreciation of your kind proposal could have induced me to say so much about the aim of my work—the essential object of it, that is. It is not a prudent thing to do but of course I feel safe with you. Seriously—I would take it as a very real kindness if you would tell me your opinion about the plan—and the manner of execution. This apart from any question of acceptance or rejection. Of course I know I can write—in a way; I also know what I am aiming at—and it is not pure story-telling. To know that my work justifies the aim would be encouraging—to be told the reverse would be a lesson. I can only be a gainer by what you say. I feel I must apologize for spreading myself over so many pages. Believe me, dear Mr Blackwood, very faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

6th Sept. 1897.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

Stanford-le Hope | Essex. | 11th Sept 1897.

DEAR SIR.

I am very sorry to hear of your indisposition. I trust that by this time you are quite recovered. It was very good of you to think of my work—and of the state of my mind. Pray, believe I am not impatient. I only ventured to write you at such a length about my story on the understanding that you would read at your leisure.

I remain, dear Sir, very faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

Wm Blackwood Esq^{re}

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 14 September 1897*]

. . . *Conrad*. Please don't read into my report of yesterday a quite decided opinion against the suitability of "The Rescue" for Serial purposes. I had the book rights going into other hands chiefly in view. It would not be prudent to make H [einemann] have cause to say that W. B. and Sons play his game of enticing away authors. But if I had a talk with Conrad (whom I should greatly like to meet) I could as judiciously as possible point out to him the difficulty. . . .

[*Conrad to William Blackwood and Sons*]

Stanford-le-Hope. | 28th Sept 97

Messrs: Wm. Blackwood & Sons

DEAR SIRS

I return the proof of *Karain*—with thanks for your courtesy in letting me have it so much in advance of its appearance.

I would be very glad to know that Mr Blackwood has recovered from his indisposition. I sincerely hope he has.

Very faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George Street | Edinburgh. | 28th Oct. 1897.

MY DEAR SIR

The November No. of the Magazine containing your delightfully written and powerful sketch "*Karain: A Memory*" will be published on Friday, and I have pleasure in desiring an early copy to be sent for your acceptance. I hope you will like the company your first contribution to old *Maga* is in, and that you duly received the cheque for £40 in acknowledgment of it. That was the honorarium which I arranged with Mr Fisher Unwin was to be paid for the story, and I sent him a cheque for the amount on the 29th of July. I trust this is only the first of many contributions from your pen which are to enrich the pages of *Maga*. Have you any other short story which you

would care to send me, on any subject which you would care to treat on the lines say of M^r Irving's paper entitled "Tiger Majesty",¹ which I think you will be interested in.

I have been greatly interested in Part I of "The Rescue". It leaves off at a most aggravating point, just when the action is about to begin, and is really only introduction so far, but with Lingard as hero the story is safe to prove a most attractive one. There is that about the old man's personality which draws one, and I am sure your readers will be delighted to make his further acquaintance. Indeed you succeed, not only in this story but in your other works in which Lingard appears, in introducing into them something of the attraction of the man himself, which seems to throw a spell over the reader until he feels the glamour & atmosphere of the East.

As far as I can judge at present the story is one that would I think when completed make an admirable serial for *Maga*. My difficulty is that you have promised the book-rights to M^r Heineman[n]. Under my circumstances it would go much against the grain with me to see a serial in *Maga* brought out by another house; but apart from considerations of sentiment, it is a distinct loss, as it would deprive me of the opportunity of adding a good book to our list of publications, as is otherwise always the case with the *Magazine* serial stories, & in these days of keen competition I feel that I would hardly be justified in waiving this advantage. I wonder if it would not be possible for you to come to some arrangement with Mr. Heineman[n] whereby I might have this work entirely. Of course I would not wish even to suggest anything that might be disagreeable to yourself, but I have thought that M^r Heineman[n] might be willing to oblige us both, were it explained to him that your chance of securing the serial rights in "Blackwood" depended upon the book-rights going with them.

Yours very truly

(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD

Joseph Conrad Esq.

¹ Edward A. Irving (1850-1943), "Tiger Majesty," *Blackwood's*, 162 (1897), 699-710.

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

Stanford-le Hope | Essex. 29/10/97.

DEAR SIR.

Thanks for the copy of the Nov: number. I need not enlarge upon the pleasure of seeing my story in such a good place.

I turned to *Tennyson* with eagerness. Apart from the interest of details as to Maga's attitude to the rising poet¹ there is value there in things said by the way. With these I am in perfect accord. Here and there I would take exception to a phrase—to the phrase rather than to the thought. Not every man who "waved a cap of liberty on a pike" was a scoundrel.² And England had not only given refuge to criminals. There was a greatness in that mistaken hospitality which is the inheritance of all parties. Of course I do not defend political crime. It is repulsive to me by tradition, by sentiment, and even by reflexion. But some of their men had struggled for an idea, openly, in the light of day, and sacrificed to it all that to most men makes life worth living. Moreover a sweeping assertion is always wrong, since men are infinitely varied; and hard words are useless because they cannot combat ideas. And the ideas (that live) should be combatted, not the men who die.

In this combat "Maga" is to the front. In this time of fluid principles the soul of "Maga" changeth not. It informs every page and knows no compromise. It is something! It is, indeed, everything.

Believe me very sincerely yours

JPH CONRAD.

Wm. Blackwood Esq^{re}

¹ Kipling. See the review of Hallam Tennyson's *Memoir* of his father. *Blackwood's*, 162 (1897), 629.

² Apropos of Hallam and Tennyson's expedition in 1830 to help the Spanish insurgents: "A dirty rascal had only to wave a cap of liberty upon a pike to enlist the enthusiasm of hundreds of educated young gentlemen." *Ibid.*, 621.

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

Stanford-le Hope. | 30/10/97.

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Just a word to acknowledge your good letter. I am very glad you are quite recovered now.

I wrote you two days ago. I hope you will forgive any impertinence that may have crept into my letter. I am sure you will.

What you say is important to me and requires consideration. I need not tell you I fully appreciate every kind word you say. Will you allow me some little time to think and see? I am not bound to anyone—strictly speaking, but I think myself under moral obligation to Mr Heinemann

Mr Unwin has not favoured me with a scratch of the pen (or <1> a single click of the typewriter) for the last 3 months. I knew nothing about the cheque. If I did not acknowledge sooner your prompt payment it was purely for want of information not of “manners”.

Believe me, dear Mr Blackwood, always very sincerely yours

JPH CONRAD.

P.S. I shall be most happy to make M^r Meldrum’s acquaintance. I think of going to town the day after tomorrow, and will call on him—without prejudice of having the pleasure to see him here.

[*Opposite paragraph concerning Unwin is a marginal note of Blackwood’s*] This is rather good & just as Meldrum expected¹—W B

¹ See letter of 6 May, above.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 2 November 1897*]

. . . In the middle of our talk [Meldrum and a young Dutch novelist’s] we were joined by Conrad, and all three adjourned and had a cup of tea and a chat in Daniel Lambert’s next door.¹

¹ The Daniel Lambert Tavern, Ludgate Hill, about a hundred yards from 37 Paternoster Row. (Mr. G. D. Blackwood.)

Conrad is a Pole, he tells me. By the way, you know, I suppose, that he never heard of your cheque to Unwin until you casually mentioned it in a letter? Conrad is to meditate your letter and come up and have lunch with me, and tell me his decision. But he doubts if he can put off Heinemann. It appears that when in a rather tight place some time ago, when Unwin was his publisher, Pawling, H's partner, was extraordinarily kind to him. . . .

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 5 November 1897*]

. . . I should be very glad in view of my seeing Mr Joseph Conrad next time, if you would tell me what you wrote him. Or rather, for he was a little in doubt, what exactly you intended him to understand. If he gets Heinemann to let you publish the "Rescue", do you accept the story for *Maga* on the piece you have seen? Or are you to see more before you accept it? You will see the point. Until you have seen so much that you can say definitely, "I accept", Conrad wouldn't care to approach H. He may not care to do so in any case, but I should like to know your mind in view of our next discussing the matter. By the way, Conrad's price, I believe, is at the rate of his short story;¹ and for book-rates H gives him a sum down—not excessive, and a 15% and 20% royalty. . . .

¹ That is, £2/5 a thousand words. Garnett, 99.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

STANFORD-LE-HOPE | ESSEX. | 5/11/97.

DEAR MR MELDRUM.

I am sorry to have perhaps given you unnecessary trouble yesterday. This morning I had a letter from my friend Pawling which makes it out of question for the book to go anywhere

else than to Mr Heinemann.¹ This I have foreseen all along and made—as you remember—no secret of it. I have no doubt M^r Blackwood will understand that it is feeling—not greed—that guides me in that matter. If I was to throw Pawling over the greater success the book would be the greater would be my remorse.

Under those circumstances I can only say that I regret extremely and sincerely that the *Rescue* won't appear in the *Maga*—since its appearance as a serial there was conditional on the book going to M^r Blackwood.

May I ask you for the return of part Ist which I want to look over. Or shall I write to M^r Blackwood for it? But I hope that the matter ending thus won't prevent friendly relations with M^r Blackwood and with yourself.

I am, dear sir, very truly yours

JPH. CONRAD

P.S. You will let me know in a friendly way what you think of *The Return*.² I am very anxious to know your *frank* opinion. And may I, now and then, turn up for a talk?

[In Meldrum's hand] Ans.

¹ Pawling had promised to pay £100 for the book rights of *The Rescue* and to find £400 for the serial rights. Garnett, 104.

² Conrad had been struggling with "The Return" since the completion of "Karain," about 14 April 1897. Garnett, 81. It was finished on 24 September. Quinn, 172.

[*Extracts: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 6 November 1897*]

. . . I like the letters you sent me, for there was a spontaneous enthusiasm for the November *Maga* in them. And, from the literary point of view, it was good—I should say unmatched anywhere for a long time. Millar, Munro, Conrad, Capes, Sir Herbert in his way,—that's a cluster difficult to beat among the young men. And they write in a way to please the old <writers> *Maga* readers, I fancy. . . .

. . . After writing you about Conrad, I got the enclosed. I have written him to write to you. I could see that the temptation of *Maga* was great, but appealed to him as a temptation. Pawling has evidently been good to him. . . .

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

Stanford-le-Hope. | Essex. | 9th/11/97.

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Just a year ago, when I wanted badly to be taken up the Firm of M^r Wm. Heinemann accepted an unfinished work of mine, met all my wishes, and, as things went on, did really much more than I had any reason to expect. I had no introduction to them; I could not boast of even a tolerable sale; my literary achievement amounted in all to two books¹—praised certainly, but as certainly not successful, in a commercial sense. Under these circumstances they took me up and introduced my work to Mr Henley; <when> and it was its good fortune to please that remarkable man. In that way I secured admission to the pages of the *New Review*.²

Since that time I've been approached from various quarters—with definite and acceptable offers. Under the sense of moral obligation I've refused them all without even referring to M^r Heinemann. When, however, you did me the honour to ask for my work (I write this phrase as I feel it) I felt justified in departing for once from the conduct my obligation dictated. I went to M^r Heinemann. I did not know your terms and I did not ask for theirs. I simply asked them whether they meant to stick to me. If so I meant to stick to them. But should they have any doubts as to the advisability of—so to speak—keeping me on, there was a flattering and unique opportunity which I could not find it in my heart to sacrifice to my sense of what

¹ *Almayer* and *An Outcast of the Islands*.

² Shortly before 21 November 1896, Garnett delivered the unfinished MS of *The Nigger* to Pawling, who interested Henley in it. Garnett, 59. Henley took up the story before Heinemann, not vice versa. "If accepted by Henley then Heinemann will publish it afterwards in a small volume." Aubry, I, 197.

was due to them. They emphatically declared that their intention is to work for my success here and in America and that their wish is to have the publication of all my books. After the proofs of his goodwill I am bound to take my friend's Pawling (of the firm W^m Heineman[n]) word. Consequently I am resolved to stick to them with the hope that they will never regret their (and mine) decision.

From first to last, dear M^r Blackwood, this has been no question of money. From you I was sure not only of justice but of generosity. The tradition of your House made any doubt impossible. On the other hand they had given practical proof that they could be generous. It was simply a question of fidelity—if I may so express it.

This decision is quite compatible with the feeling of a very sincere regret that it will not be my good fortune to appear serially in the pages of *Maga*. I trust you will continue to me the kind feelings you have been pleased to express. Believe me, dear Mr Blackwood, very faithfully yours

JPH CONRAD.

P.S. Till you expressly decline I consider myself authorized to send you any short story or sketch I may write. I have in my mind a study of a scotch seaman—a humble individual, but whose memory is cherished not only by myself but by many others well on and successful on the road of life

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 15 November 1897*]

. . . It is a pity about Conrad, but I daresay he was committed to the course he had taken. He's a decent fellow; and the Scotch sailor article should be a decided "hit". . . .

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George Street | Edinburgh, Novr 22. 1897.

DEAR M^r CONRAD

I have just got the December *Maga* off my hands, and am now giving attention to the January N^o, which I always like to

be an exceptionally strong and interesting one. I wonder if there is any chance of your having the sketch of the old Scottish Seaman you suggested writing ready in time for it. If you could send me the MS. by the 10th of next month, or soon after, I would gladly keep space for it.

Yours very truly,
(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

Joseph Conrad Esq.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

Stanford-le-Hope | Essex. | 24 Nov. 97.

DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD.

I try to catch the return post. Thanks for thinking of me for the Jan^r number, but I fear it would be impossible for me to come up to time. I am wrestling with the *Rescue* and dare think of nothing else. Yet there are days when I am incapable of writing a line. I had too many such days lately. When anything short gets itself written I shall send it to you at once.

I am sorry you have that bother with your men. There is something inspiring in the idea of the heads of Blackwood doing their own printing.¹ Another episode for the future vols of the firm's history! I've read the two vols.² It's *most* interesting and well done too.

Once more thanks. Believe me, dear M^r Blackwood, always most sincerely yours

JPH. CONRAD

¹ George Blackwood, William's nephew, assumed responsibility for printing the magazine during a strike of printing machine operators. Blackwood Letter Book, 23 November 1897.

² Margaret O. Oliphant (1828-1897), *Annals of a Publishing House: William Blackwood and His Sons*, Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1897, 2 vols.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, Saturday (26 March 1898)*]

. . . I hope you are none the worse of the 'wicket' yesterday. I was so glad you could meet Crane and Conrad—the two

foremost of the youngest writers just now, and types of the men we want to get round the firm.¹

Date: A luncheon given by William Blackwood, the Garrick Club, 25 March 1898. See *The Bookman*, 69 (1929), 235.

¹ For Conrad's account of his taking Crane to Meldrum in order to raise the £60 necessary for his passage to New York and the Spanish-American War, see his "Stephen Crane," *Last Essays* (1926). Two entries in the Blackwood cash ledgers: Crane was advanced £40 on 7 April 1898 and Cora Crane £20 on 16 April. After this last entry is a note in brackets: "In full, two articles." (Mr. G. D. Blackwood.) Crane's one article, "The Price of the Harness," was published in December 1898. Crane tried twice to wipe out his indebtedness to Blackwood, but his articles were turned down. See extracts of 30 November 1898, 2 February 1899, below.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

[Stanford-le-Hope] Friday. [3 June 1898]

DEAR MR MELDRUM.

I send you the end of <the> *Youth* Sorry for the delay but had lots of interruptions.

I beg you will read it and if it should not commend itself to you send it back at once. If you do *not* think Mr Blackwood would like it I can't wait for his return.

I'll send *Jim* along on Monday—as much as there is of him.¹

I would be awfully pleased to see you here—soon. Drop me a line a day before.

Faithful[l]y yours

JPH CONRAD.

¹ Whether Conrad began "Lord Jim" before "Youth" or vice versa remains an unsettled question. For circumstantial evidence giving priority to "Lord Jim," see Gordan, 259. Part of Gordan's argument is based upon two letters to Garnett, both with indefinite dates. See next letter.

Date: Conrad records the completion of "Youth" in a letter of 3 June 1898—a Friday. "Half an hour ago I've written the last word." Aubry, I, 238.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

[Stanford-le-Hope] Saturday [4 June 1898]

DEAR MR MELDRUM.

Last night I posted you the last pages of *Youth*. Here I send the first 18 pages of *Jim: A sketch* just to let you see what

it is like. It will give you an idea of the spirit the thing is conceived in. I rather think it ought to be worked out in no less than 20-25 thousand words. Say *two* numbers of "Maga".

Suppose you let Mr Blackwood have a sight of it? I leave it however to your judgment. The MS is sent to *you*, just to form an opinion; I would want it back but at your convenience.

As to book-form publication you understand I do not wish to—so to speak—intrude the matter upon Mr Blackwood. I am averse to concluding anything as to a work not yet in existence. Nevertheless I would be glad to know what Mr Blackwood would offer for it. All being well we could perhaps be ready for the next spring season. The SS McClure C^o would have the book in the States.¹

What do you think of a day in the country? Say the week after next. Fix your own day and drop me a word. There is a train from Fenchurch Street at 11.35 which would bring you here in time for lunch. Last train at night at 8. But we could put you up and you would be in London at 9.30 next day.

Very faithfully yours

JPH CONRAD.

¹ Conrad first proposed the volume of short stories, though on "Tuesday" [7 June 1898] he wrote, "The talk about short stories has been commenced by those men B. and Mcl and seeing them willing to discuss the future I gave them an idea of what I would do." Garnett, 130, 131.

Date: The Friday-Saturday sequence, the references to posting the last pages of "Youth."

This letter gives a clue in all probability to the date of a letter to Garnett and dated by him "Saturday [May 1898]." "I've sold (I think) the sea things to B. for £ 35 (13000 words). Meldrum thinks there's no doubt—but still B. must see it himself." Garnett, 130. Blackwood was to return from the Continent on the following Monday, 6 June. "Saturday [4 June 1898]" seems a most likely date for this letter.

In a letter dated by Garnett "Tuesday [May 1898]" Conrad says, "B. has returned yesterday [that is, Monday, 6 June] and Meldrum wrote me saying I shall hear from him very soon." Garnett, 131. Conrad heard from him on Thursday, 9 June. The date of the letter to Garnett is therefore "Tuesday [7 June 1898]."

[William Blackwood to Conrad]

Morley's Hotel, London. | June 9th 1898

DEAR M^r CONRAD

I have now got back from my holiday abroad, and was happy to hear from M^r Meldrum and my nephew that you have sent in MS. of a story entitled "Youth" which they have both read and are delighted with. I have therefore much pleasure in accepting it for Maga & to pay you £35 for its appearance. M^r Meldrum also tells me that you have another longer one on the stocks which you think will also be suitable for Maga, & that you would feel obliged by my sending you a payment of £5 to account of it, which I now have pleasure in doing per enclosed cheque for "Youth", which I have drawn for £40.

M^r Meldrum & M^r McClure are arranging about their appearance, and I hope soon to send you proof to revise. Looking forward to reading "Youth" myself & to hear soon that your other story will soon be completed—believe me,

Yours very truly,

(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

Joseph Conrad Esq.

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

Stanford-le-Hope | Essex. | 11th June 1898

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD

Thank you very much for your good letter and for the cheque for £40 of which £35 in payment for the story entitled *Youth* and £5 on account of the story (yet unfinished) entitled *Jim: A sketch*.

My thanks however are due both for the matter and for the manner, and if the first superficially viewed appears a business transaction where the word thanks may be taken as a conventional expression, I beg you to believe I have a very clear sense of the inestimable value of the second. Inestimable is deliberately written. Man does not live by bread alone, and very little bread will go a long way towards sustaining life—without making

it more supportable. For that last one must turn to men and be often disappointed. A word of appreciation, a friendly act performed in a friendly manner these are as rare as nuggets in gold-bearing sand and suddenly enrich the most obscure the most solitary existence.

This being the trend of my thought you may imagine I was gratified by the terms of your letter apart from the "bis dat qui . . . You know the proverb.¹ And for that also my thanks are due.

I trust you will like *Youth*. Its only merit is its being a bit of life. Of course I feel it could have been made better if it had fallen into better hands; but at any rate the sentiment which guided me was genuine.

I hope you have, in Aix-les-Bains, stored up health for a good long time. If the British Public, who is a kind of inferior Providence for the use of Authors wills it I shall go there myself next year. I am, dear Mr Blackwood very faithfully yours

JOSEPH CONRAD.

¹ *Bis dat qui cito dat*: "He gives twice, who gives at once."

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

[Stanford-le-Hope] 15th June 98

MY DEAR MELDRUM.

I had your letter and a wire from McClure. Next week will suit me, any day it suits you; but I rather think McClure is coming anyhow—tomorrow probably. I've wired to know for certain.

I had no intention to come to town for the next month. Could I not give my mind and advice (both pretty worthless but very much at your service if you have occasion for such rubbish) in writing? But if the thing is really so that I can be of any use I could run down on Friday or Sat. Just drop me a line.

I received *Jim* all right. Thanks.

In any case we shall meet next week and till then Au revoir

Yours faithfully

JPH. CONRAD.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

Stanford-le-Hope | 20th June 1898

DEAR MR MELDRUM.

We shall expect you on Thursday for Lunch. Let me know what train you are coming by so that I can meet you. There's <one> a good train at 9.45 am. arriving <here> here at 10.46. Should this be too early then the 11.45 brings you here at *one*.

McClure has been here last Friday; came late and spent the night. I think he is busy all this week. We talked of war and politics mostly. I hope he wasn't too bored.

Expecting a word from you I am dear Mr Meldrum

Yours very faithfully

JPH. CONRAD.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 27 June 1898*]

. . . Conrad I liked much better at home than abroad. He is, I think, very sensible and conscientious. He would be delighted if we arranged to publish a book of short stories—all of the sea—next spring, if the stories are ready: if not, then in the following autumn. I gently hinted that his price for *Maga* was high, and he showed me an offer of £50 for a short story which he declined in a popular magazine—*Pearson's*. He wants to have his stories in a good magazine. I believe that he will be quite agreeable to accept for his volume of sea-stories 2d per 1/- for English edition and 5d per copy colonial, with an advance calculated on 2000 English copies—I believe so. I shall be glad to hear what you think. We agreed, without any bargain, that “Karain” and not the last story should be the basis for payment for stories appearing in the magazine. . . .¹

¹ The rate finally agreed on was £2/10 a thousand words instead of £2/5. See letters of 19 May 1900 and 6 February 1902, below.

[William Blackwood and Sons to Conrad]

"45" 21: July: 98.

DEAR SIR,

We have the pleasure of enclosing you herewith proof of yr story "Youth" wh M^r Blackwood proposes to use in the Sept. no. of the Magazine. He hopes this arrangement will fall in with yr plans for its publication in America.

We are, y^{rs} very truly
(signed) W B & SONS

Joseph Conrad Esq.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | Friday 10 Aug 98
MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

Very many thanks for the cheque for £20 which you have so kindly sent me. It shall be paid back as soon as I get my advance from M^r B'wood.

As to Jim: I think that September *is* safe *quite*.¹ Strictly speaking you have enough for two instalments now in hand. If you divide in that way the story may run into 4no^s But even if you distribute the whole into three I am confident of coming to time. This work isn't like the *Rescue* where I aim at purely esthetic (if I dare say so) effects. I am now in tolerable health. There's really nothing to stand in the way of a happy termination <to> of Jim's troubles; and its as likely as not the story will be finished a long time before the second instalment comes out.

If America is in the way of the dates I shall not Write any slower for it. I *never mean* to be slow. The stuff comes out at its own rate. I am always ready to put it down; nothing would

¹ On 7 June 1898 Conrad wrote Garnett, "I intend to write nothing else [but the *Rescue*]. I am not going to finish *Jim* now. Not before Septer." Garnett, 131. For the dating of this letter see letter of 4 June 1898, above.

This intention is belied by the present letter, which expresses the hope of finishing the story by September. Conrad, of course, was writing at the *Rescue* throughout the summer also. See Garnett, 132, 133, 134.

induce me to lay down my pen if I *feel* a sentence—or even a word ready to my hand. The trouble is that too often—alas!—I’ve to Wait for the sentence—for the word.

What wonder then that during the long blank hours the doubt creeps into the mind and I ask myself whether I am fitted for that work. The worst is that while I am thus powerless to produce my imagination is extremely active: whole paragraphs, whole pages, whole chapters pass through my mind. Everything is there: descriptions, dialogue, <reflection> reflection—everything—everything but the belief, the conviction, the only thing needed to make me put pen to paper. I’ve thought out a volume in a day till I felt sick in mind and heart and gone to bed, completely done up, without having written a line. The effort I put out should give birth to Masterpieces as big As Mountains—and it brings forth a ridiculous mouse now and then.

Therefore I must sell my mice as dear as I can since I must live; that’s why I beg you very earnestly to arrange matters so as not to give McClure any excuse for losing My Am: Ser: rights of *Jim*. It <seems> looks as if I were very mercenary but God knows, it is not so. I am impatient of material anxieties and they frighten me too because I feel how mysteriously independent of myself is my power of expression. It is there—I believe—and some thought, and a little insight. All this is there; but I am not as the work men who can take up and lay down their tools. I am, so to speak, only the agent of an unreliable master.

Once more—many thanks for all and every one of the good offices I receive at your hands. We haven’t given up the hope of seeing you here before the ‘rainy season’ sets in. With kindest regards from us both.

Always yours

JPH. CONRAD

I’ve received 2^d batch of *Jim* last night. There will be a good many corrections to make in proof for Maga. Upon the whole I don’t think the story very Bad. I am cheered.

[William Blackwood to Conrad]

"45" August 30/98

DEAR MR CONRAD,

I ought to have written you before this to say how pleased I was that you & Meldrum had arranged for the publication of a volume of short stories. I understand that you and he agreed that the terms were to be royalty of 2^d in the shilling on the pub^{ed} price with an advance on publication equivalent to the royalty on a sale of 2000 copies which is £100—The arrangement has my cordial approval & the fine weather & a houseful of visitors, which made me rather idle, is my excuse for not saying so sooner.

"Youth" will be a favourite item for Maga's readers this month I expect, and for myself I now look forward to "Jim: A Sketch", which I hope makes good progress.

Have you heard anything from Stephen Crane or his Wife—how he has come out of the American & Spanish War. He was to have sent me some articles whenever he got the opportunity but I have heard nothing yet from him.¹

With kind regards | Yours very truly,

(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD

Joseph Conrad Esq.

¹ For Conrad's embarrassment over Crane's failure to write Blackwood, see *The Bookman*, 69 (1929), 370.

[William Blackwood to Conrad]

Sept 8/98

DEAR MR CONRAD.

I am much gratified that you feel so kindly towards Maga, & I reciprocate heartily all your good feelings.¹

I can conceive nothing more harrassing & worrying to a writer than the state of tension you are in & I am glad you have

¹ Conrad's letter, to which this one is a reply, has been lost. Its subject is probably his harrassing anxieties over the slowness of his production. See letter of 10 August, above.

told me of it as I should not like to add to your anxieties while under such a strain, & I hope you will not allow your engagements with me to weigh upon you in the meantime. I have always looked upon the writing of fiction as something not to be bounded altogether by time or space notwithstanding my old friend Anthony Trollope who went to a desk as a shoemaker goes to his last.

Yours very truly,
(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

Joseph Conrad Esq.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 10 October 1898*]

. . . In a note from Conrad a day or two ago, he says, "Stephen Crane has been lost, but has turned up. Mrs Crane had a cable from him yesterday (4th) or the day before.¹ She dropped me word of this good news but did not say when he is coming back. It can't be very long." I hope Conrad will be spending an afternoon and evening with us this week or next, and I'll hear more of Crane. We must get something of his best out of him. (I am sending you for safekeeping in Edinburgh the receipt for the money which Crane gave me before he went away.² I got it stamped at Somerset House at the time and have had it locked up here.)

¹ Crane's seclusion from his fellow countrymen in Havana, in order to write, gave rise to the legend of his "disappearance." Cora Crane's letter to the Secretary of War, 25 September, led to his being found. See Ames W. Williams, "Stephen Crane, War Correspondent," *The New Colophon*, I (1948), 120-121.

² See extract of [26 March 1898], footnote, above.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

Stanford le Hope | Essex. | 12th Oct. 98.

DEAR MR MELDRUM.

That was a good and kind letter you wrote and I ought to have answered at once. But I seldom do things I ought; if I did I would be a better man, by a long sight.

Jessie's and my thanks to you and Mrs Meldrum for the invitation which delights us. The state of affairs however is this.

We leave here on the 26th of this month to go to another farm house but this time in Kent. My new address will be *Pent Farm Postling. Stanford N^r Hythe.*

I got it from a man called Hueffer¹ a grandson of Madox Brown and nephew to D. G. Rossetti. He is an exceedingly decent chap who lets me have the thing awfully cheap. Besides the whole old place is full of rubbishy relics of Browns and Rossettis. Theres Brown's first picture, likewise that of Dante Gabriel; Christina Rossetti's writing table which I intend to profane by my own wretched MSS.—and so on. It's a great solitude about a mile and a quarter from Sandling Junction Station on SER. and within 3 miles (by road) of Hythe. Chalk soil and a vast view on the Valley of the Stour.

What with this and having no one to leave our precious baby with I don't see how we could avail ourselves of your invitation very soon. But we lay it back carefully in our memory for use at the very earliest opportunity. Now we are unsettled and soon we shall be still more unsettled till we shake into our new place. And then I must write with fear at my back and ruin before me if I don't make good time. The Rescue begins in first April's issue and the Ill^d Lond. News to run 3 months.²

The people in Edinburgh did their little best to ruin me because the delay of sending proof of *Youth* to McClure made the copyrighting of that story fall through and the Atlantic Monthly which was going to publish it cancelled the arrangement in consequence. However it's past, no use lamenting and for *Jim* I shall have a duplicate copy <of> typewritten to make sure.

I called on you last Friday with the intention to carry you off to lunch with McClure but was told you weren't in town

¹ Conrad had concluded arrangements for renting Pent Farm from Ford Madox Hueffer by 29 September 1898 and for collaborating with him by a month later. Garnett, 137; Aubry, I, 253.

² This serialization, planned first for October 1898, then for the following April, came to nothing. Aubry, I, 247, 255.

at all. Better luck next time. With very kind regards from us both

I am always faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

P. S. As soon as the decks of our new ship are cleared you must come and affront the hardships of our household on a Saturday to Monday expedition. And if the weather is clement and Mrs Meldrum has the courage I trust we shall have the great pleasure of seeing her with you. *Miss Meldrum too*.³ There is a spare cot, and it's high time Borys was introduced to ladies of his own age. I'll be writing to you soon.

[In Meldrum's hand] Ans. Oct. 29/98

³ Elizabeth A. S. Meldrum, born 1 March 1897. (Miss Meldrum.)

[*Extracts: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 30 November 1898*]

. . . This is a most excellent Number of *Maga*. I can't agree with you about Crane's story¹ which seems to me very remarkable; but his later thing, which I enclose, does not seem to me to be up to the mark and I do not advise its publication. The price to be allowed for the story in the present Number is a difficult question. His price is very high; on the other hand the price agreed upon for his Cuban articles was moderate, and, then, he is greatly in your obligation. I think the question might remain open until he gets back, if ever he does. Let me say again that I should have been very sorry had you advanced money further to the Cranes. I fancy he is far more foolish than you know. I can find no justification for the man, though I can many excuses for one with such a strange and all-on-edge temperament as his. But as I gather from your letter that you object to my personally moving in the matter, I have told Conrad and the Mrs that I can do no more. . . .

.....
Private.

P. S. I am sorry to trouble you with a private matter.

¹ "The Price of the Harness."

Some time ago Conrad wrote me that Crane was in deep waters on the other side, and that Mrs Crane wanted to go out to him; and he asked me, if I felt I could, to approach you about a further loan. Conrad himself, he said, had no ready money: £75 or £100 was wanted;¹ and all he could offer was to hand over to you as security the book of short stories about which you and he had made a royalty arrangement.² Mrs Crane, also, was to offer, as security, a bill of sale on her furniture, and promised that whoever lent her the money should have a story of Crane's one day. A bill of sale is rather a flimsy security, but it is security to some extent. The promise of a story is none; for, apart from the fact that Crane, I know, is tied to Heinemann for his next novel, and is bound to you to offer [the] first free one, Mrs Crane's promise on behalf of her husband is, legally, absolutely worthless. After considering the matter I replied to Conrad that I couldn't put the proposal before you. I have, however, a considerable belief in Crane as a writer, and also did not see how you were to be repaid in work for the £50³ already lent if Crane didn't get back to do work. But chiefly I wished to oblige Conrad whom I admire as a writer and like as a man, and wished to keep attached to the House. So I promised Conrad to do what I could among friends of my own by becoming security myself. Mr M. B. Nairn was the man I was thinking of, but unfortunately he was from home in America. Then young Macquene occurred to me, and I will not be surprised if he agrees to advance the money to Mrs Crane. It afterwards struck me, however, and it seemed to strike Mr George also, when I related the circumstances to him, that you might expect me to put such a matter before you. I COULD NOT, AND DO NOT ADVISE YOU TO LEND THE CRANES MONEY FURTHER, but I have thought it it best to have your refusal for my own guidance

¹ In Conrad's letter of 1 November 1898 to Cora Crane he mentions £50 as the amount he had proposed to Meldrum. Conrad did not anticipate her fetching Stephen, Meldrum apparently did. *The Bookman*, 69 (1949), 369.

² Conrad's proposal in the same letter is more vague—"my own undertaking to furnish them copy to the amount advanced should unforeseen circumstances prevent you and Stephen paying him back as soon as he may expect." *Ibid.*, 370.

³ Error for £60. See extract of 26 March 1898, footnote, above.

before I put Macqueen (supposing him to write me that he is willing to advance the money) in communication with Mrs Crane. You will understand why I trouble you in the matter. I am not at all afraid that you would misunderstand my position, for I feel sure that you know I would always try to act in your interest only, but just that there may not be a shadow of a misunderstanding, I think it better to tell you any transactions I have with authors, even if they be personal and private, of this kind. Until I hear from you, therefore, I will not further arrangements for letting Mrs Crane have the money; on the other hand, I needn't say that every day Crane is left without resources in America, his bill becomes the bigger. Of course, Macqueen³ may decline to let Mrs Crane have the money: in which case I should tell Conrad, as I have told him before, that while I should like to do what I can for Stephen Crane, I am unable to do anything at this time.

³ By 4 December Conrad was writing Mrs. Crane, "You made us quite happy with your letter [with its news of her having found the money to send Stephen]. I had a couple of pretty bad days just before; having heard from Meldrum about that wretched Macqueen you may imagine how sick I felt." MS: Columbia University Library. The reference is doubtless to John Macqueen, London publisher. Goldring, 85.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE. | 13th Dec 1898

DEAR MR. BLACKWOOD.

I owe you a great many thanks for the *Maga* which reaches me with a most charming regularity. In truth it is the only monthly I care to read, and each number is very welcome, though each is a sharp jog to my conscience. And yet, God knows, it is wide-awake enough and daily avenges the many wrongs my patient publishers suffer at my hands.

And this is all I can say unless I were to unfold for the nth time the miserable tale of my inefficiency. I trust however that in Jan^y I'll be able to send you about 30 000 words or perhaps

a little less, towards the Vol: of short stories.¹ Apart from my interest it is such a pleasure for me to appear in the *Maga* that you may well believe it is not laziness that keeps me back. It is, alas, something—I don't know what—not so easy to overcome. With immense effort a thin trickle of MS is produced—and that, just now, must be kept in one channel only lest no one gets anything and I am completely undone.

The Stephen Crane in the last number has given me great satisfaction.² The man will develop. I find this story, broader, gentler, less tricky and just as individual as the best of his work. It is the best bit of work he had done since the *Red Badge*. One or two competent men wrote to me about it and they share my opinion.

I had a treat in the shape of a N^o of the *Singapore Free Press* 2½ columns about "Mr Conrad at home and abroad".³ Extremely laudatory but in fact telling me I don't know anything about it. Well I never did set up as an authority on Malaysia. I looked for a medium in which to express myself. I am inexact and ignorant no doubt (most of us are) but I don't think I sinned so recklessly. Curiously enough all the details about the little characteristic acts and customs which they hold up as proof I have taken out (to be safe) from undoubted sources—dull, wise books. It is rather staggering to find myself so far astray. In *Karain*, for instance, there's not a single action of my man (and good many of his expressions) that cannot be backed by a traveller's tale—I mean a serious traveller's. And yet this story "can only be called Malay in Mr Conrad's sense". Sad.

Well. I only wanted you to know I am alive and not utterly lost to sense of my shortcomings. Accept my best wishes for the coming year. It is near enough already to make sinners of my sort think about turning over a new leaf and so on. I hope

¹ The first explicit hint of "Heart of Darkness."

² "The Price of the Harness," *Blackwood's*, 164 (1898), 829 ff.

³ "The Trail of the Book-Worm: Mr. Joseph Conrad at Home and Abroad," *Singapore Free Press*, Weekly Mail Edition (1 September 1898), 142. Written by Hugh Clifford. See Clifford, 5.

you will like my new leaves however belated they may be. I am
dear Mr Blackwood always Yours faithfully

JPH CONRAD.

I am most sincerely glad to see Munro's book⁴ in its 4th
Edition. Munro is an artist—besides being an excellent fellow
with a pretty weakness for my work.

⁴ Neil Munro (1864-1930), *John Splendid, A Highland Romance*, Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1898.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE. | 21/12/98

DEAR MR MELDRUM

The heartiest wishes to you and yours from us both. I
trust next year we shall be able to foregather often.

I don't know whether I've told you that Mrs Crane got the
cash and has sent it off to Havana to bring Stephen back.¹
I know you will like to hear that she got over *that* trouble.

I think the *Harness* is first rate. The best bit of work since
the Red Badge days. Several men wrote to me about it in almost
these very terms.

Excuse hurried scrawl but I've left all my Xmas letters to
the last And have a dozen more to write tonight.

With kindest regards | Always faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

I am writing something for *Maga* a tale (short) in the manner
of *Youth*, to be ready in a few days.²

¹ Conrad had learned this news a fortnight previously. See letter of 4
December to Cora Crane, *The Bookman*, 69 (1929), 370.

² "Heart of Darkness."

[William Blackwood to Conrad]

45 George St | Dec 30/98

DEAR MR CONRAD,

I must not let the old year close without sending you my best
wishes for a happy new year to you & yours.

I am hoping to have the pleasure of seeing your hand in *Maga* again soon, and I should be specially pleased if you had anything on the stocks, or nearly ready, to send me for *Maga's* Thousandth number, which you will have seen from the slip inserted in the January number takes place in February. It would give me pleasure to see something from your pen in that number, but I will require to know soon if you think of having something ready in time for it. Will you also let me know about what space you will require, so that I may arrange accordingly. You would see that the January number is set in a new fount of type, which I hope you like and that it contains a good many fewer words than the old type—about 520 instead of 620. My nephews join in all good wishes.

Yours Very Sincerely,
(Signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

Joseph Conrad Esq^e

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE. | 31/12/98

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Come this moment to hand is your good letter whose kind wishes, believe me, I reciprocate with all my heart.

Your proposal delights me. As it happens I am (and have been for the last 10 days) working for *Maga*. The thing is far advanced and would have been finished by this only our little boy fell ill, I was disturbed and upset and the work suffered. I expect to be ready in a very few days. It is a narrative after the manner of *youth* told by the same man dealing with his experience on a river in Central Africa. The *idea* in it is not as obvious as in *youth*—or at least not so obviously presented. I tell you all this, for tho' I have no doubts as to the *workmanship* I do not know whether the *subject* will commend itself to you for that particular number. Of course I should be very glad to appear in it and shall try to hurry up the copy for that express purpose, but I wish you to understand that I am prepared

to leave the ultimate decision as to the date of appearance to your decision after perusal.

The title I am thinking of is "*The Heart of Darkness*" but the narrative is not gloomy. The criminality of inefficiency and pure selfishness when tackling the civilizing work in Africa is a justifiable idea. The subject is of our time distinctly—though not topically treated. It is a story as much as <An> my *Outpost of Progress* was but, so to speak 'takes in' more—is a little wider—is less concentrated upon individuals. I destine it for the vol: which is to bear your imprint. Its length will be under 20,000 words as I see it now. If suitable and you wish to curtail it a couple of pars: could be taken out—from the proof, perhaps.

There is also the question of McClure securing copyright in the States. They bungled the *Youth* affair¹ and I am not in a position to despise the almighty dollar—as yet.

All I can do is to hurry up. Meantime many thanks for thinking of me.

Friendly greetings to your Nephew. I am delighted to be remembered by him.

I am dear Mr Blackwood, most sincerely yours

JPH. CONRAD

¹ See letter of 12 October 1898, above.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE. | 2 Jan 189<8>9.

DEAR MR MELDRUM.

I enclose here a letter from M^r Blackwood and a note (at the back of my reply).

This will make it clear to you how matters are. I am very pleased Mr B'wood thought of me; but his letter coming just now makes it difficult for me to do what I intended doing—or at least I fancy so.

I began the story for Maga 10 days ago. It would have been finished Yesterday had it not been our boy fell ill (he is better now) and thus knocked on the head my peace of

mind and, say, inspiration. At any rate there is a delay. Now my intention was to ask Mr Blackwood to let me have £40 before the 10th Jan. on the *general* account of my short stories (ser. & book). The story would have covered the sum or more; but now the story is not quite ready and my necessity remains all the same. Still I would have asked for the cheque had it not been for this extremely pleasant letter. I don't want Mr B'wood to think I am taking advantage of his ouverture. In this difficulty real or fancied may I ask you whether you could arrange the matter for me with Mr B'wood. The story shall be in your hands shortly it will be about 20000 words (at the agreed rate for serial it would be about £50). My necessity is not a matter of life or death but of the very greatest inconvenience of which I would fain be relieved by your good offices. If you think I could ask Mr B'wood without gross indecency please mediate. I've just written to him and don't want to fire off another letter. And you can put a better look on the thing.

If you want to refer to the story its title so far is *The Heart of Darkness*.

A Central Afr: narrative in the manner of Youth—told by the same man.

It would stand dividing into two instalments.

I would like you particularly to read the story and the type shall go to London. As I write this one in pencil my wife *must* type herself, or I would send you the *MS* of What is ready. A mere shadow of love interest just in the last pages—but I hope it will have the effect I intend. With our kindest regards to Mrs Meldrum and yourself

I am most faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

Mrs Crane still without news.¹ I don't know what to think

[*In William Blackwood's hand*] I enclose you copy of my answer to this from Conrad—WB

¹ John Berryman (*Stephen Crane*, New York: William Sloane Associates, 1950, 234) says that Crane had cabled his wife on 20 December. Yet three days later Conrad expressed the wish that she had given him "some news of Stephen." *The Bookman*, 69 (1929), 371.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 4 January 1899*]

I sent you through Mr George a letter from Conrad, knowing you would be glad to hear he had a story on the stocks. From another letter (just received and now enclosed) I gather that you had already written him at New Year, and also that your letter he appreciates so much that it has put him in a fix. I have thought it best to frankly send you the letter so that you can see how the matter stands as explained by himself. At the same time, though I don't look upon it as a breach of confidence, it would be better I think if in writing him you do not say that you have seen this letter, but only that I had written you putting the matter before you. And I am replying to Conrad meanwhile with a little note, saying that I am sure you would not have misunderstood him had he written you himself, but that I have the greatest pleasure in doing so in his behalf. His delicacy contrasts singularly with request of that—ahem!—Mrs. S., with her threat to the dear old house if the said dear old house doesn't come down sufficiently heavily. . . .¹

¹ Christina Steevens, who was acting as agent for her journalist husband George W. Steevens (1869-1900), during his absence abroad. The success of *With Kitchener to Khartoum* (1898) inspired her to dictate extravagant terms for the next book. "I think it a fair bargain for us both would be £500 on day of publication and 25% royalty." (Letter of 30 December 1898.) William Blackwood thought her "a most ungrateful woman." (See his note on letter of 8 October 1898.) National Library of Scotland.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE. | 6th Jan 1899

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Thanks very much for the cheque for £40 (on account of short stories) which I received to-day.

I am, dear Sir | always faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

P.S. I assure you I appreciate your prompt readiness. I am—alas! not so prompt. Still to morrow I shall send off about 12.000 of *H of D* to Mr Meldrum. I shall also request him to have a copy typewritten on my act/ to hand to McClure.

Lots more of the story is written—not typed, and in a few days shall be despatched. I am afraid it will be too long for one n°. It has grown upon me a bit—and anyhow the value is in the detail.

J.C.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 6 January 1899*]

. . . I am glad to see that Conrad's mind will be relieved by both cheque and kind letter. Of course, I fancy most young writers, etc. etc. are easy-going and extravagant, and they are all very generous, I have found, or most of them. But I find it no difficulty to understand Conrad's position. It surprises me that he can get along at all. His long story costs two years' work. He *may* get £400 out of it, not more. And we see what he does besides his long story—two or three short ones each year, bringing in at the most £100. That means that his total income from his work doesn't exceed £300. Of course he doesn't attempt the impossible by living in London on that, but even in the country it must be difficult always to put his hand on money, if he hasn't any private capital. And I think it very splendid of him to refuse to do any pot-boiling and hope, for him and for ourselves too, that it will pay him in the long run. I'm sure he'll be very gratified to receive your kind letter. Thank you for sending me a copy of it. . . .

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE. | Monday [9 January
1899]

DEAR MR MELDRUM.

I send you pp. 1 to 35 typed of *The Heart of Darkness* and from 35 (typed) it goes on to p. 58 of Manuscript.

pp 58 to 90

which is all written up to yesterday. I am awfully sorry to send the pencil MS but my wife is not well enough to go on and I

want you to have the first half of the story at once. May I ask you to have *the Whole* typed out on my acc/t in at least 2 copies. One for Mr McClure and one for *Maga*. The type from the MS should be corrected by me before going to printers so you perhaps Will let me have <it> that portion for that purpose as soon as ready.

I had a friendly letter and cheque £40 from Mr Blackwood. I am in doubt at to the 1000th N°. There will be no time for U S. Copyright. And I can't forego a penny. Are you angry with me for the bother I am giving? I am working under difficulties and that's the truth. Thanks.

Apologies. Cordially yours

JOSEPH CONRAD.

PS Where MS. illegible let them leave blank spaces I can fill up when correcting.

Stephen left for Europe I hear.¹

¹ Crane had embarked on the *Manitou* from New York. See Berryman, *Stephen Crane*, 234. This ship docked at Gravesend, 11 January. See the *Times*, 12 January 1899, 4.

Date: The letter immediately above, 6 January 1899—a Friday.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 11 January 1899*]

. . . Now about another matter: I enclose a letter from Conrad, that came with his MS. The MS. is in the typewriter's hands, and the first part certainly will be ready for me to post it on to you to-night. Thus one part of the story at least—the first part—will be available for <Januar> February. (I am following his instructions about the remainder, and am writing him urging him to send it off to you at once.) Meanwhile, I've seen Robert McClure, who promises to send the MS. off *at once*, and have it copy-righted. This also I am writing Conrad, telling him what I have done, and advising him that he need have no hesitation in letting it appear in February *Maga*. It will be noted in *Maga*, of course, as Copyrighted by McClure Co. in the United States . . .

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE. | 13 Jan 99.

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

Very, very many thanks for your wire. *That* was a real pleasure. As for the thing itself¹—it is convenient truly and amazing enough. But I am so little conscious of any kind of merit that I ask myself whether the affair is serious. It looks like a piece of luck. Now, luck is all very well.—

I suppose you'll think I am a poor, discontented creature. It isn't that at all. I can take a blessing in no matter what disguise. I can't get rid of a suspicion of injustice. I don't see anything very *solid* in my prose. However I shall keep all this to myself. I couldn't help let[t]ing you see a little of what's inside my thoughts.

I shall come up as soon as *H of D* is finished. I've sent the balance of type to Ed: I am infinitely grateful to you for your patience with me. Believe me most sincerely yours

JPH CONRAD.

¹ The *Academy* award of fifty guineas for *Tales of Unrest*, 14 January 1899. Aubry, I, 167. Conrad had known of his good fortune since 6 September 1898. *Ibid.*, 248. See Introductory Essay, xxii.

[Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 14 January 1899]

. . . On Wednesday I hadn't a single minute to read Conrad's story, first part: I read the remainder of what he sent me, but, of course, hadn't the thread. I ought to say that I am not certain from his letter that he meant me to forward the first part of the type-written MS. to you direct, but having arranged for the Copyrighting on my own responsibility, it seemed to me best not to lose a minute. In writing Conrad, I asked him to advise you as to the point at which he wished the break to occur. You have sent him a proof with instructions, I suppose; I hope he lets you have it back in time to place it after the *Noctes*, where it would do better than Sir J[ohn] M[owbray]'s undoubtedly. . . .

PS. Conrad's proof came in since I wrote the foregoing, and I have read it and enclose. Most excellent!

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 14 January 1899*]

After posting my letter to-day, I received two which bear upon it. From Conrad's you will see that he is quite pleased with the arrangement for his story, which, doubtless, he has informed you. . . .

Conrad's story is a very wonderful piece of writing, is it not? And such a "Show up" fro[for] the French!

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE. | Monday [16 January
1899]

DEAR MR MELDRUM.

Pardon my brutally bad behaviour. Of course I would be delighted and it is very good of you to ask me. As soon as I am done with the *H of D* I shall write you and the day after call on you in Paternoster Row. It will be before end of this month for certain.

The thing has grown on me. I don't think it will be bad.

With very kind regards | Most sincerely yours

JPH. CONRAD.

Date: Follows immediately that of 13 January.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 18 January 1899*]

. . . I am very glad you like Conrad's story. It is excellent to my mind

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 21 January 1899*]

. . . I was lunching with McClure at the Devonshire yesterday (and met Buchan again). It is wonderful to hear how generally

Conrad's "Youth" is spoken of as one of the finest things recently published. *His* volume of sea-stories will be a catch for us, I am sure.

[*Extracts: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 2 February 1899*]

. . . For convenience, let me tabulate the one or two points I have to write you about.

(1) Conrad's story. Glad to hear it satisfies you. I couldn't read it as it arrived just at mail time. Please note that Conrad desires three proofs: one to keep, one to return to you, and one for McClure.

(3) Mr Hueffer's letter and synopsis [regarding his proposed book on the Cinque Ports] . . . I may say that Conrad is going to work with him on a great novel about the Ana Baptists,¹ of which sect Hueffer (who is of the great German publishing family of that name)² has great masses of information. (This Conrad told me in the strictest confidence, and I should not like it to go further. I need not say that I am doing all that is possible, and successfully I think, to secure Conrad as our author solely for the future.). . .

(4) Stephen Crane arrived in England a fortnight ago.³ He wrote me the next day, and I had expected him to call about the beginning of this month, but from what Conrad tells me fear that he is still too ill to do so. I enclose the personal letter I had from him, so that you may understand his wishes, and I should be glad to know from you how you stand with him,—that is to say, how much of the £50⁴ advanced him was wiped out by the story already appeared in *Maga*. I never doubted we could get material from him to make up the account, and now that he is home it is certain. The present story, though good, does not strike me as so good as the "Price of the Harness", of which, I know, I had possibly too high an opinion

¹ Nothing came of this idea.

² The Hueffer family of Munster, Westphalia, were prominent as bankers, printers, and newspaper proprietors. Goldring, 19.

³ 11 January. See letter of [9 January 1899], footnote, above.

⁴ Error for £60. See extract of 26 March 1898, footnote, above.

however. In any case, it would be well to know how much is still due to you by Crane. so that Pinker (his agent now) may give me the selection of his best, to wipe off the score. . . .

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 6 February 1899*]

Conrad wired to-day, as you know, that he was sending the remainder of the "Heart of Darkness" story, asking us to communicate to you his opinion, or wish, that if possible the story should run over three Numbers instead of two. I may say that Conrad explained to me that the story had "grown on him," and that, feeling it not bad, he gave himself rope. At that time, however, it seemed to him that the second portion would be within bounds for one Number: I suppose it has "grown upon him" still more. . . .

[*Conrad to William Blackwood & Sons*]

[Stanford, 7 February 1899]

DEAR SIRs.

I have marked (on the last page p65) the place where the first instalment might end.

It would be about *half* of the whole story or perhaps a little more. I shall hurry up the rest as fast as I can. Excuse this scrap of paper and the pencil.

In great haste | Yours faithfully
JPH. CONRAD.

[*In another hand*] 25 pp. Typed MS to Mr Hogg GVM

Date: The phrase "Tuesdays morning post" in the letter to Meldrum, 8 February, below.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 8th Feb^y 1899.

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Thanks very much for your wire. It put my mind at ease for I felt the balance of the story was a little too long for one

instalment. For the rest I was pretty well to time with it; only 24 hours late and this solely through missing the post by some ten minutes.

I get letters from various people who seem to like the thing, so far.

I was delighted with the number. Gibbon especially fetched me quite.¹ But everything is good. Munro's verses²—excellent, and Whibley³ very interesting—very appreciative very fair. I happen to know Rimbaud's verses.

I must own that I regret the old type. One misses the familiar aspect of the pages when opening the familiar cover. I am "plus royaliste que le roi"—more conservative than Maga.

I am glad to see that the majority (in fact all) of the people for whose opinion I care seem to think I am on the right track in my work for Maga. When talking with Mr Meldrum about the forthcoming volume he seemed to agree with my idea of keeping to that line. I call it idea but probably it is a necessity. When I sit down to write for you I feel as if in a friendly atmosphere, untranneled [*sic*]—like one is with people that understand, of whom one is perfectly sure. It is a special mood and a most enjoyable one.

Well, I must go on with the wretched novel⁴ which seems to have no end and whose beginning I declare I've forgotten. It is a weird sensation; the African nightmare feeling I've tried to put into *H of D* is a mere trifle to it. Believe me, dear Sir, always very faithfully yours

JPH CONRAD.

[In William Blackwood's hand] Ans^d 10th sent him cheque £60. to a/c Parts II-III.

¹ "From the New Gibbon," *Blackwood's*, 165 (1899), 241-249.

² Neil Munro, "To Exiles," *ibid.*, 179-180.

³ Charles Whibley (*d.* 1930), "A Vagabond Poet," *ibid.*, 402-412. To Cunninghame Graham, "Can't understand Rimbaud at all. You overrate my intelligence." Aubry, I, 246 (27 August 1898).

⁴ *The Rescue*.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | Wednesday.
[8 February 1899]

DEAR MR MELDRUM.

I had a wire from Mr B'wood advising me that the story is to go into three numbers

I've send [sent] the completed MS. to Edinburgh direct, by Tuesdays morning post.

I think it will be 40000 words The first inst^{mt} was about 14000 (27 pages) and the two others should run to 12000 each. I had £40 on account and (oppressed by my usual impecuniosity) would like to have the balance at once (£50-60). If you remember our conversation¹ you may perhaps guess why I am so anxious.

Pardon me for invading your home with my business. I won't offend again.

I like the story, tho' it is terribly bad in places and falls short of my intention as a whole. Still I am glad I wrote it.

With kindest regards | very faithfully yours

JPH CONRAD.

[In Meldrum's hand] Ans. Feby. 9, 1899 [a Thursday].

¹ See letter immediately below.

[Meldrum to William Blackwood]

37, PATERNOSTER ROW | LONDON E. C. Feby. 9, 1899

Private

MY DEAR MR BLACKWOOD,

I seem to be becoming a kind of Sergeant Major in *Maga's* regiment,—a channel for representations from the ranks to the Colonel Commanding! The latest is contained in this letter from Conrad, which needs no explanations, except about the “conversation” he referred to, and that was no more private than this letter, though it may be as well to suppose both private communications.

When Conrad was with me the other afternoon, I congratulated him on the *Academy* award, and said I was glad that the cheque that accompanied it should come at so opportune a time. Then he told me why he was so impecunious. Sailing, he had saved money: all of it had gone in the struggle to win a place as a writer. A city friend, some two or three years ago, lent him £150, till he should make a name and with it so much of a future as a writer dare hope for. The very morning the *Academy* cheque arrived, arrived also a letter from this friend,¹ telling of disaster to his house, and asking if it was possible to get back his loan. Conrad had nothing but the £50 cheque, scarce out of its envelope; he endorsed it, and posted it immediately to his friend, thankful that Fate should have put it into his power to relieve himself of some of the anxiety of owing money to a man distressingly in need of it. That is the conversation referred to. I did not consider myself justified in writing you these facts then, but I do now. I can only say, as I hinted a little while ago, that Conrad is thoroughly appreciative of your kindness as well as of your admiration of his work, and that I feel sure he considers himself (for that among other reasons) bound to you in his work. There is no doubt that his writing is causing very great interest and even enthusiasm, and that, given health and the means to go on, he'll be a feather in *Maga's* cap yet.

Yours v. truly

DAVID S. MELDRUM

I have read Conrad's proof, but he is so careful a reviser, that I have not made any marks in it.

¹ Adolf P. Krieger. See Introductory Essay, xxi-xxiii.

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

Gogar Mount, Ratho Station. | 10th February 1899

DEAR MR CONRAD:—

I have to write you from my bedroom, as I am down with one of my feverish & gouty colds, but expect by Monday to be about as usual.

Thanks for your interesting letter of the 8th, which I had the pleasure of receiving this forenoon & I am very glad you like Maga's M'th number so much especially the Gibbon article. It is very clever. I was only able to read proof of part II of your powerful story last evening and I like it very much. It is very powerful and a wonderful piece of descriptive word painting with the weird African nightmare sensation sustained all through in a marvellous manner. I am puzzled where would be the best ending for the part, but that you will be better able to decide almost than I can, as I have not read the typewritten part yet.

I have no doubt a cheque to account would be acceptable and I have pleasure in enclosing you one for £60. When all is in type we can square it up. I haste to catch tonight's post. believe me always,

Yours very sincerely

(Sig d) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD

3 Proofs were posted to you on Wednesday

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE. | Friday [10 February
1899]

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

I got your good letter this morning and at the same time the enclosed which please read. This is the third message of the sort since I saw you. Either the man is nervously anxious or he wants to put pressure on me—or he is in a bad way. In any case this kind of thing will drive me crazy. I can't work after I get such letters. I did send him the £50 of the Academy and I owe him <100> 130 yet. I rather owe it to someone else. You know the whole absurd and painful story of the broken friendship—without provocation and even any cause I could remotely guess at. Their business which he started 14 years ago with my money is very good—perfectly sound. And here I am worried with these miserable letters.

This must be stopped. I don't know where to turn. I can't tell you how distressed I am. I am averse to mortgaging my

future and yet I must do it in some way because with this idiotic affair bothering me I can not sleep. The man (Hope)¹ he mentions in the letter is utterly ruined and even if I had the heart to squeeze him I would not get any blood out of that stone. He will come ultimately into some money but meantime he is hopeless.

Could Mr Blackwood besides the amount I have been asking for (*H of D.* balance) (with shame I assure you) send me an advance of £50 on the *volume*. I say distinctly the vol. because when I send in more copy I shall most likely need the serial money. All this is too wretched for words. I wish Mr Blackwood to know why I apply to him. It is not for my pleasure or even for my health I want the money—tho' my doctor has urged me to go to Nice for a hydropathic cure. It is for my peace of mind. Peace of mind. Would you tell him? Send also the enclosed letter in conf^{re} if you judge it necessary. If not please burn it. If I can get £100 in all I shall pay it to him—and pull another hole in my own belt—by Jove!

You may imagine how well the Rescue is going on with all this. And I don't know how to apologize to you for the constant worry I cause. Yours very faithful always

J. CONRAD

[*In Meldrum's hand*] Ans. Feby 11/99 [a Saturday]

¹ G. F. W. Hope was Conrad's oldest English friend. See letter of 3 December 1899, below.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM | STANFORD | NEAR HYTHE. | 12th Febr. 1899.

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

The delay in acknowledging your kind letter and enclosure arises from the fact that in Stanford we have no Sunday post and I was not in time for the Sat: night's mail.

Thanks very much for what you send and still more for what you say. The cheque for £60 now received and the previous one of £40 on account of the same tale (*H of D*) will probably

overpay it as I do not think it will run to 40 000 words. I did write that number or even more but I've been revising and compressing the end not a little. The proof of the second instalment I kept only twelve hours—not knowing but it might have been wanted at once. I marked a place—on p. 24—where a break is, at least, practicable. If it does not commend itself to your judgment there may be a better place, somewhere within the last inst^t of typed MS, I've sent to Edinburgh on Tuesday last. My own MS copy is in such confusion <that I could not> and moreover so unlike the final 'type' that I could not venture on its authority to indicate any final sentence or paragraph for the ending of part 2^d.

I am delighted to hear you like the Story. Very good of you to write to me when so painfully indisposed. I trust the attack has not been severe. Mine always are and I am subject to then [them] at least once a year.

I wonder what you will think of the end of the Story. I've been writing up to it and it loomed rather effective till I came to it actually. Still I am not altogether dissatisfied with the manner of it; but of course one cannot judge one's own *fresh* work—at any rate.

Re volume of short stories. I wished for some time to ask you whether you would object to my dedicating the Vol: to R. B. Cunninghame Graham.¹ Strictly speaking it <strictly> is a matter between the dedicator and the other person, but in this case—considering the imprint of the House and your own convictions I would prefer to defer to your wishes. I do not dedicate to C. Graham the socialist or to C. Graham the aristocrat (he is both—you know) but to one of the few men I *know*—in the full sense of the word—and knowing cannot but appreciate and respect—abstractedly as human beings. I do not share his political convictions or even all his ideas of art, but we have enough ideas in common to base a strong friendship upon.

¹ Conrad dedicated *Typhoon and Other Stories* (1903) to him.

Should you dislike the notion I'll inscribe the *Rescue* to him instead of the *Tales*.

Pardon the length of this letter and pray believe me always

Yours faithfully

JPH. CONRAD.

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

Gogar Mount | Ratho Station. | February 13th / 99

DEAR MR. CONRAD:—

Since writing to you on Friday last our friend Meldrum tells me that you are receiving some letters on money matters which are making you very unhappy. I can easily realise how the worry of such a matter must interfere with your literary work, and I have much pleasure in sending you the enclosed cheque for One Hundred Pounds (£100) which with the one I sent you on the 10th inst. for £60 will I hope relieve you of any further anxiety. This advance of £100 kindly put to account of the stories I am to have the pleasure of publishing for you before long in volume form.

As your name has been much before the public as one of the Academy prize winners, as well as by your story "Youth["] in *Maga*, and "The Heart of Darkness" in *Maga's M* number, it would be well I think if we could publish the volume in the end of April or early in May. Also our Traveller has begun his Spring journey and it would be of great service to the book if you could send us a title of it with as little delay as possible. We could then announce it, and he could book orders for it. Thanks for prompt return of proof of March part, and am glad you have decided to end it where you have. Hoping you will now be easier in mind, and be soon fit to be at work at the big book.

Believe me | Always yours Sincerely
(Signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE. | Monday—ev^g
[13 February 1899]

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

Ever so many thanks for your kind letter. Yes I ought to be more sensible and not let those things disturb me; but I am still in a wretched nervous state and thus to be sensible is quite out of question with me.

I had a most kind letter from Mr Blackwood's private house enclosing me a cheque for £60. I sent on £50 to the man and kept 10 for myself. This morning I had another letter from him. Well, well.

I do not want Mr B'wood to think I am taking an advantage of his readiness to accomodate me. The £100 he paid me cover the *H of D* and even more as I don't think the story will run up to 40000 words. All this makes me wretched. I don't get on with the *R* which requires a special mood difficult to attain and still more difficult to preserve. Meantime I am anxious to get on with the *Maga* stories. I am exasperated at my own stupidity.

You are awfully good and patient with me. I acknowledged Mr B'wood's letter but said nothing about the distressful business leaving it wholly in your hands and not knowing then whether you would consider it opportune.

My wife sends her kind regards. Believe me dear Mr Meldrum very Gratefully yours

JPH CONRAD.

PS I hear the *Spectator*¹ noticed the story. My press agency did not send any cutting. Is it a fact and is the notice good?

[In Meldrum's hand] Ans, with that of Feby 14, on Feby 15, 1899 [a Wednesday].

¹ "The Magazines," *The Spectator*, 82 (1899), 174.

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 14 Febr. 99.

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

I don't know how to thank you for the very real and friendly service you are doing me by the advance of £100 on the volume of short tales. The cheque <came> for the above sum came to hand to day.

In reply to points touched upon in your letter:

I, myself, am very desirous to take advantage of the kind of popularity conferred by the *Ac[ade]my* award. I am still more desirous to meet your views as to the date of publication. I have a story *Jim* half-written or one-third written (10.000 words) which is intended for the volume. There are with *Youth* (13.000) and *H of D* (38.000?) say 50 to 52 thousand words ready. *Jim* being 20 or 30 thou: would almost make up matter enough for a book. But—are 3 stories only, enough? And supposing even I finished *Jim* in time could it go serially into *Maga* before the date you contemplate? Besides I thought of two other stories (more in the 'note' of my 'Maga' work) one of them being called *First Command*¹ and the other (a sketch) entitled *A Seaman*. These are not written. They creep about in my head but [have] got to be caught and tortured into some kind of shape. I think—I think they would turn out good as good as (they say) *Youth* is. But the whole thing is complicated by my horrible inability to finish the *Rescue* for which McClure has made arrangements.² I must peg away at it.

It seems horribly ungrateful of me to talk about the difficulty of doing what you wish, but I must face the consequences not of my neglect <of> or laziness but of positive ill-health which has caused <this> the shameful delay in writing the *R*. It is small consolation to think I could *not* help it though I did my best. My best has been so very bad after all.

¹ . . . "This tale, which I have had for a long time in my mind, under the title of 'First Command'. . . ." Preface to *The Shadow Line*, Prefaces, 174.

² S. S. McClure had advanced £250 for the American serial rights of the *Rescue* by 5 March 1898. Aubry, I, 230.

—Yet: if in your opinion *Youth. H of D* and *Jim* would make a Volume I shall *try* to get *Jim* finished in April (my heart sinks when I think how days pass and how slow my work is). In that case I would forego the serial pub: of *Jim* not to delay the appearance of the volume. I only can say I shall *try*. I dare say no more after my recent experiences as to being punctual. The Vol of the 3 Stories would not be positively bad. Whether you would judge such a publication opportune or not I shall do my best to finish *Jim* in April.

Even in the matter of the title I am unable to answer you decisively. I've not thought of it yet—and it is by no means easy to invent something telling and comprehensive. "Youth" and Other Tales" would not do? I wish to convey the notion of something lived through and remembered. *Tales from Memory* (.) you may think a clumsy title. It is so. I don't seem able to think of anything to-night. Why not: "Three Tales" by Joseph Conrad. Flaubert (*mutatis mutandis*) published *Trois contes*. The titles of the three tales could be printed on the cover in smaller capitals thus: Youth; A Narrative. Heart of Dark: Jim: A sketch. That is only if the vol: is to be of the three stories. Pardon the length of this letter, and the unsatisfactory nature of its contents. I *am* an unsatisfactory person, and to no one more than to myself.

I am very sorry to see you have not yet left your room. The acknowledgment of your previous letter I addressed to Edinburgh. By this post I send the letter itself (10th of Febr) to 45 George Street asking for its return after copy taken. Is that right? I am so pleased you approve the break-off of the 2^d inst. I was in doubt. You have removed an immense load from my mind by your kind and sympathetic action. I enclose here a formal acknowledgement of the sum received in advance.

Believe me dear Mr Blackwood your[s], very faithfully

JPH CONRAD

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 14 Febr 99.

DEAR MR MELDRUM.

Mr Blackwood has done more than I expected and more than I hoped. I've sent him a formal acknowledgment for the £100 stating distinctly they are on acct/ of royalties on book of Tales and the whole sum agreed upon as advance.

Of course I also wrote a letter of thanks.

He wishes me to get the volume ready for May. How can I? I'll try to finish *Jim* by that time and am ready to forego its serial appearance for the sake of meeting Mr B'wood's views. But would it be a good vol? Only three stories. Still it would be 70,000 words. I have two more stories in my head which would run the copy to 120,000 words, but I can't possibly be ready with them before say—July. (I include *Jim* too to be finished first.) I must now peg on at the Rescue.

I said that much in my reply to Mr B'wood. If he really desires to Send out a vol: by me in Ap: or May <well> it must be a three-Story vol. I suggested for title [*sic*](—(in that case) page

Three Tales

by

Jph Conr.

Youth. A Narrative

Heart of Darkness

Tuan Jim: A sketch.

I can't think of anything else. Can you? Of course I am not anxious to lose the serial value of *Jim*, if that could be helped. But if I can finish *him* in time and Mr B'wood decides on immediate pubⁿ I am prepared to let *Jim* go. I've said this to Mr B'wood. In that case the stories: "First Command";¹ the one about a Captains wife; "A Seaman" sketch; and "Equitable Division" (a story of a typhoon)² would perhaps find hospitality in the *Maga* and go to make another Vol. later on.

¹ See footnote, letter immediately above.

² *Typhoon*.

Of this idea I've said nothing in my letter to Mr B'wood, but put it before you, should M. B'wood stick to the may publication and *Jim is ready*, which last upon my conscience I dare not promise.

Many thanks to you for your friendly offices. | Always yours
JPH CONRAD.

[*Extracts: Meldrum to William Blackwood, (15 February 1899)*]

Thank you for sending me the letters yesterday. I brought them down to-day to show them to Mr George before sending them back. I think it was awfully good of you to let me know what you had written to Conrad, and also to write to him as you did. I know he will be extremely grateful (or else I am altogether wrong in my opinion of the man) and I feel sure that you will not [have] cause to regret having attached so brilliant a writer to the staff in this way. . . .

Cunningham Grahame [sic]. I think it could do nothing but good to the book to have it dedicated to so brilliant a writer as Cunningham Grahame, as Conrad proposes. . . .

Date: William Blackwood's letter of 13 February.

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George Street | 27/2/99

DEAR MR. CONRAD:—

I have stupidly mislaid your last letter to me, but as far as I can remember what I write to you now is in accordance with your wishes and suggestions as contained in it. Now that I know your views fully regarding the volume I think it will be very much better to postpone publication until the Autumn. This will give you more time to write the additional stories, and I shall be glad to have them for *Maga*. If you can manage it I would rather like I think to have "Jim; a Sketch" for the June number. As far as I can see at present that would suit my arrangements best, but let me have the M.S. whenever you have it ready.

I am better and had my first drive out on Friday. I shall soon pick up again. Thank you for your kind sympathy.

With kind regards, Yours sincerely,

(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD

Joseph Conrad Esq.

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George St. | 10/3/99

DEAR MR. CONRAD,

Since my convalescence I have not been writing more letters than was absolutely necessary, but I cannot leave home for a change and rest in the South of Ireland without first sending you a line to say how much I like the final part of "The Heart of Darkness". It is I think extraordinarily vivid and powerful, and a wonderful study of what may be called the process of decivilisation. Thank you for returning proof so promptly.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

Joseph Conrad Esq.,

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | Thursday.

6th July 99.

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

Herewith 3 chap^{rs} 31 pp. of Lord Jim, or to speak correctly two complete chapters and as much of the third as is ready.

Confiding in your friendly offices I ask you for a typewritten copy of this batch for myself, together with the return of my own type. The text is pretty correct as it stands now and any small changes I may wish to make shall wait till I get the proof from Maga. This is not enough for one instalment but I will be sending you pages (a few at a time) and work at it steadily till the end. I trust the end of the Month will come together with the end of the story. Your good letter has cheered me. The story will improve as it goes on. You will arrange the time for

publication <in America> with McClure; I should not like to lose the American serial of this story if it can be avoided.

The story will be fully 40000 words and I shall ask Mr Blackwood for £120 which is a little more than the agreed rate but expect to do more work for *Maga* before the year is out—that is if you want me—and make it right in that way. We must talk this matter over when we meet next as I have had proposals made for a series of short stories (or rather short serials)¹ and would like to know Mr B'wood's intentions. I may say at once that I would rather work for *maga* at a less rate than those people offer me; but some revision of terms must take place. However there is plenty of time for that discussion. The important thing now for me is to get rid of my deplorable Jim with honour and satisfaction to all concerned.

My wife's kind regards. She wants to know whether you would risk a visit here—and so do I. We could arrange the time. What do you say?

Very faithfully yours,
CONRAD.

[In Meldrum's hand] Ans. July 9/99

¹ For Heinemann, see Introductory Essay, xviii.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 31st July 99.

MY DEAR Mr MELDRUM.

Thanks for your letter. I have been seedy and interrupted in various ways; this explains the delay and the small quantity of copy I am sending you now.

Here's the end of Chap^r III. Chap^r IV whole and the beginning of Chap^r V. pp of my type 32 to 50 which I should like to be doubly copied—one set for me and the other for E'burgh.

I shall be sending you MS almost daily if only a few pages at a time keeping it up till the end which, I pray, may be soon but is not in sight yet not by a long way.

I had proof from E'burgh which I return them by the same post that takes this letter to you.

I would like to get £50 on acct of *Jim* at once.

These three tales will make a thick vol or I am much mistaken. *Jim* may turn out longer than *H of D* even. Whether as good?—that's a question. Let us hope.

I make note of the new agreement entered into with Mr B'wood. £5 per 1000 words serial rights (in England) and 20% book. No advance.¹ And once more thanks very much for arranging the matter.

I am my dear Mr Meldrum very faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

[In Meldrum's hand] Ans. Aug 2/99

¹ These terms were to apply to a proposed second volume of short stories. See letter of 19 May 1900, below.

[Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 10 August 1899]

I have written fully in my diary about the Conrad matter;¹ but there is another point about it which is better as a private communication. Conrad asked me to ask you if you could let him have an advance of £50 on the serial rights of *Jim*. I said I would, when I sent you the next batch of *Jim*. Now that you have got that, I convey to you his message. . . .

¹ See footnote, letter immediately above.

[Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 16 August 1899]

. . . I believe that Conrad would be grateful for having the advance on *Jim* at once. In accordance with your instructions, I intimated to McClure that *Jim* begins in October, and to Conrad I wrote strongly urging him that he must let his American chances for *Jim* go, if necessary, in order to have the book issued in the early spring, or, rather, early in the early spring. . . .

[*Extracts: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 18 August 1899*]

. . . I fancy from your letter that I neglected to say how much Conrad wishes in advance, which was very stupid of me. He only asked for £50, and (if I may suggest) I would not send more than he asks. Please don't misunderstand me: he is as little likely to presume on anything as any man I have met, and I have perfect confidence in his honour, but he is human, and we all of us would be slightly influenced by a double dose of generosity, even when we didn't misinterpret it as showing a special desire on the giver's part to keep us. Conrad knows very well how generous you have been, and appreciates it. Besides, no doubt, he'll need more some other day, and if he's like some people I know, when he has it it just goes! I hope you understand my reasons for mentioning this at all.

For the story itself—'let's see the end of it' is what I feel myself saying. I think it will come out as well as the 'Heart of Darkness': both, to my mind, want the 'form' of *Youth*.

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George St. | Edinburgh, Augt. 21. 99

MY DEAR CONRAD,

In a letter I have from Meldrum he writes me that it would be a convenience to yourself if I could send you a cheque of £50 to account of "Lord Jim", which I am very pleased to do, and I now enclose it.

I hope you are keeping steadily at work on the story as I have delayed commencing it in Sept' partly to give you a better prospect of getting the story placed in America. I am having the last two instalments of ms. set up, & hope to have proofs ready to send you in a day or two to correct before sending to McClure. As far as I am yet able to judge it promises to be a striking and powerful story, and will I hope in the end come out as well as "Youth", which gave you quite a fresh reputation.

Yours very truly,

(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD

Joseph Conrad, Esq.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 22 Aug^{nt} 99

DEAR MR MELDRUM.

I've dispatched today 12 pp. more of Jim—addressed to the office. More would have been sent but my wife not being very well could not type yesterday. They shall be coming in very soon: I am going straight ahead with Jim and am rather pleased with him so far.

I haven't heard yet from Mr B'wood, neither in reference to the advance I asked for *Jim* nor to the arrangement for future work. Did I read your letter aright that that last is 'fixed' on conditions proposed by me? As to the first, to have to go a-begging is bad enough—and nothing but dire necessity would drive me to it; therefore the delay in the effect of it is most tormenting. All these are miserable cares.

Speaking of future work it is I suppose understood that I have a free hand in placing my stories elsewhere too than in *Maga*. Or do you think Mr B'wood wishes to have *everything* till the next vol (after the Three Tales) is completed? I ask for two reasons. One that—don't you think?—there may be too much Conrad in *Maga* by and by. The other is this: That having made a beastly hash of my *Rescue* engagements (the book itself is right enough) I feel I would like to let Heinemann have something of mine in the meantime. Now there is a law of Medes and Persians that anything appearing in *Maga* must be published in book form by the Firm—isn't there? This being so the stuff destined for H. must appear serially somewhere else. I have enough matter laid up in my head for two more vols in the style—or, let us say as they do of men-of-war cruisers—in the class "Youth" and if possible I would like to share it between B'wood and H'nn—unless I get on <much> (in the next few months) much quicker with the *Rescue* than I expect.

This for your consideration. Moreover <when> after Jim is finished I would like to give Mr B'wood the sketch of <the>

old Captain Loutit¹ and another story—at new rates—together about 30 to 35000 words (or more) Will he want them So soon after Jim—will he want them at all? I wouldn't want to hurry the publication. I would be only anxious to sell them.

Of course my dear Sir I never for a moment supposed you would want to criticize my method (or no-method) of work. If I wrote touching my difficulties it is because sometimes it is very hard to keep one's trouble to oneself, and writing to you I was sure of 'comprehension'. You have been so friendly to me that you must bear the penalty of my occasional confidences.

If you could jog their memories in E'gh without breaking any sacred usages or compromising my good standing—you would be doing a good action. My wife's kind regards.

Always yours faithfully

JPH. CONRAD.

I dare say McClure is right in everything. So I've written him. By this time you have 20000 words of Jim in hand, and I want £50. You may reckon on 40-42000 as the whole.

[*In Meldrum's hand*] Ans. August 26/99.

¹ Possibly the original of old Captain Whalley in "The End of the Tether." In his letter of 26 June 1902, below, Conrad says of this story, "It has been in my mind for this eighteen months past." This estimate, to be sure, hardly squares with the thirty-three months which actually separate these two letters.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 22 Augst 99

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

I've this afternoon received your letter enclosing a cheque for £50 on acct/ of *Jim*. Many thanks for your unwearied readiness to answer my unceremonious—to say the least—demands.

I am glad you like Jim so far. Your good opinion gives one confidence. From the nature of things treated the story can not be as dramatic (in a certain sense) as the *H of D*. It is certainly more like *Youth*. It is however longer and more varied. The structure of it is a little loose—this however need

not detract from its interest—from the “general reader” point of view. The question of *art* is so endless, so involved and so obscure that one is tempted to turn one’s face resolutely away from it. I’ve certainly an idea—apart from the idea and the subject of the story—which guides me in my writing, but I would be hard put to it if requested to give it out in the shape of a fixed formula. After all in this as in every other human endeavour one is answerable only to one’s conscience.

I have this day sent off another 3000 words to your London office. 2000 more are actually written or rather scrawled and awaiting the domestic typewriter. I devote myself exclusively to *Jim*. I find I can’t live with more than one story at a time. It’s a kind of literary monoganism. You know how desperately slow I work. Scores of notions present themselves—expressions suggest themselves by the dozen, but the inward voice that decides:—this is well—this is right—is not heard sometimes for days together. And meantime one must live!

Very good of you to delay *Jim*’s app’ce out of regard for my american business.¹ It’s obvious that matter is of prime importance to me. My unsatisfactory manner of production is at fault here. If the thing can’t be managed, well, then it must go. Let no horrid Yank stand in the way of *Maga*’s convenience.

Hugh Clifford with his wife paid me a flying visit. Actually came down all the way to make my acquaintance. I was quite touched.² We sang *Maga*’s praises. His last thing (Augst N^o) was rather good—I mean as a piece of writing.³ His knowledge is unique. If I only knew one hundredth part of what he knows I would move a mountain or two. This is an endless letter. I’ve had news of your health from Meldrum. I trust you are quite well now. I’ve suffered from excruciating headaches all the summer.

Believe me dear Mr Blackwood always very faithfully yours
JOSEPH CONRAD.

¹ The first instalment of *Lord Jim* appeared in *Blackwood’s* for October.

² On this occasion Clifford confessed to having written “Mr. Conrad at Home and Abroad” in the *Singapore Free Press*. (See letter of 13 December 1898, above.) See Clifford, 7.

³ “In Chains,” *Blackwood’s* 166 (1899), 160-173.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE. | 27 Augst 99MY DEAR M^r MELDRUM.

My wife's and mine heartiest congratulations on the safe arrival of a boy.¹ I trust that in a few days you will find time to drop us a word as to his and his mother's welfare.

The matter mentioned is not at all pressing. I just wanted to hear your opinion of it. It is more than kind of you to write at such a length. If my thoughts run that way it is only out of regard for Heinemann. I am not anxious to fling myself on sixpenny or even shilling magazines. I am quite content to work for *maga* and I always meant to have one vol for M^r B'wood and only now and then divert a story for an eventual vol for H.

Why not bring Mr B'wood's manager² here? Coming to lunch you may be back in London for dinner.

I return the advance you have been so kind as to accomodate me with. Many thanks. | Always yours

JPH. CONRAD.

[In Meldrum's hand] Ans. Aug. 29/99.

¹ Jan Broers Meldrum, born 25 August 1899. (Miss Meldrum.)

² George A. Morton. (Mr. G. D. Blackwood.)

[Conrad to William Blackwood and Sons]

Pent Farm | Stanford N^r Hythe | 1st Sept 99

DEAR SIRs:

I beg to acknowledge receipt of 'type' of *Jim*. Allow me to point out that I've this time got only *one* copy of type and that my original text has not been returned to me. Would you kindly send me the duplicate and also the original.

Very faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

[In Meldrum's hand] Copy sent Sept 12/99

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | Monday. 17 Sep^t 99
MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

Many thanks for your letter. Will you convey my cordial invitation to Mr Morton. If you go to Rye in the morning why not come on here for dinner and the night. You could be back in London next day at 10.30 am were it necessary. Any day *after Tuesday* will do.

I trust Mrs Meldrum and the boy are going on well.

Always yours

JPH. CONRAD.

Please wire or write in time. Wire best as letters do go astray. I will be sending more Jim in a day or two

[*In Meldrum's hand*] Ans. 20/9/99

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | [29 September
1899]

MY DEAR M^r MELDRUM.

I wrote you this morning but since a horrid bill came in. I am awfully sorry to bother you but if you could lend me another ten pounds till *Jim* is finished you would render me a service.

Pardon this In haste

Yours

CONRAD.

Date: Conrad's note of thanks, below, is dated 2 October 1899, a Monday.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

[Stanford] 2^d Oct 99

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM

Just time for a word of thanks before the post goes.

If I had a year to write before me I wouldn't know what adequate I could say.

Always yours

JPH CONRAD

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 18th Oct^r 99

MY DEAR MELDRUM.

Thanks for all you've done and for all you say. As ill-luck would have it Jessie got <a> rh[e]umatism in the right wrist. The worst of the pain is over but it [she] is still quite powerless. She couldn't travel alone with the child in that state; as to me I protest I dare not stray far away from my table. Jim is approaching his climax. I have a good few pages more but I must attend to my own typewriting just now. I had a fair copy and am dispatching it to E'burgh tomorrow along with some proofs.

I haven't heard from Mr B'wood yet; but after your letter my mind is at ease for a bit anyhow.

Pardon hurried scrawl. Pray convey our heartfelt blessing to your Wife and also our regret. We trust Betty is getting on. You say nothing of the Man.

With kindest regard from us both to Mrs. Meldrum and yourself I am Always your[s] faithfully

JPH. CONRAD.

[In Meldrum's hand] Nov. 16/99

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | Tuesday.

[24 October 1899]

MY DEAR M^r MELDRUM—

Here's some more Jim. The Jan^y inst is well advanced if not wholly finished. I've dispatched the proofs and additional type for the Dec^{er} Number yesterday, proposing that the inst^t should include Chap^r VIII if possible. I hope they will see their way. In that case Jan and Febr <numbers without> instalments without being unduly long will contain the end of the story.

I've *not* heard from Mr Blackwood, as yet. I may get a letter this morning but I must post this at once.

I hope Betty is getting on and both your Wife and yourself are well. Our kindest regards | Always yours,

JPH CONRAD.

[*In Meldrum's hand*] Ans. 26/10/99 [a Thursday]

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George Street | Edinburgh, 26th Oct. 1899

MY DEAR CONRAD,

I have now the pleasure of sending you a further payment of £50 on account of "Lord Jim's" appearance in *Maga*, and I had intended sending it to you sooner, but I have been on holiday at Harrowgate for a month, & after Meldrum left me, I am ashamed to say it escaped my attention. He gave me full particulars of his late visit to you and how the story was progressing, & I was glad to find on my return yesterday another instalment with the corrected proof of the further portion for the Dec. part. The story seems to be developing wonderfully in your hands. I think it should make a very powerful addition to the volume.

I lately had a delightful call from our mutual friend Hugh Clifford.

Hoping my neglect in not sending you enclosed cheque sooner has not inconvenienced you, believe me, always sincerely,
(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD

Joseph Conrad, Esq.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM | STANFORD | NEAR HYTHE. | 27 Oct 99

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Many thanks for the cheque for £50—second payment on acc^t of Jim—which I received an hour ago. I could have dispatched the Dec^{er} inst^t ten days sooner only I wished to take full advantage of the time. There is always a correction to make on every day—no matter how long I keep proof or type by

me; but at last I felt I must part with that batch and devote myself to the next.

The greater part of the Ja^{vu} inst. is written and practically ready; some of it in London for a fair copy and seventeen pages on the table before me to be pecked at, slashed, turned over, for two days more, and depart for Paternoster Row on Monday. I *am* glad you like it—for tho' the thing were not absolutely bad it might not have been exactly to your mind. The beginning wobbles a good deal; I did cut up shamefully the proofs without being able to put it firmly on its feet; however my little band of faithfuls professes itself (in various letters) to be immensely pleased. You express yourself hopefully about the book. You may be sure that none of your kind words are wasted. The man here wants them, wants everything he can get of such genuine encouragement.

I think Zack may be congratulated on the Novel.¹ It is an advance on the short stories—a *promising* advance. I've just finished reading it having waited for the last inst: Of course I could argue vehemently (with the *Writer* not with the *Lady*) about this and that par:- this and that page; but the distinction is undeniable the vision at times most remarkably artistic. The French article in the last number I dislike frankly as to *tone*.² It is not Maga's tone either; it does not give an impression of intelligence behind the words—it is not quite candid. Why this superficial acrimony while much more severe things—much more!—could have been said? The navy article³ awful[l]y interesting and the Fashion in Fiction⁴ simply delightful—the perfection of manner! with its tactful banter and a serious intention behind. The *London*⁵ is remarkable though this kind of thing does not appeal to me. It is a very literary

¹ *On Trial* by "Zack" (pseudonym for Gwendoline Keats) was concluded in the October issue of *Blackwood's* just as *Lord Jim* began. The theme of both stories is the loss of honor. Hence the point of the remark at the end of this letter.

² "France To-day" [an indictment of French injustice in the Dreyfus Affair], *Blackwood's*, 166 (1899), 543-555.

³ "The Naval Manoeuvres of 1899," *ibid.*, 569-586.

⁴ "Fashions in Fiction," *ibid.*, 531-542.

⁵ "London," *ibid.*, 460-483.

thing and, I apprehend, a little beyond me. I do not know where to place it in the scale of my liking. And the number as a whole is excellent—but what number isn't?

I shall of course read Buchan⁶ at once and write you *all* I think. I've heard of him but have not read anything of his. I read very little—too little, I sometimes think. I look forward to the Nov: issue. Maga is the bulk of my reading.

And now dear Mr Blackwood I shall just slip these sheets under an envelope ready for tomorrow's post and go back to my grind till midnight or so. Pages of Jim are under my elbow to the right and left and in front of me and if I can screw up one page more (that when written does not look particularly valuable) it will be so much done towards duty and peace of mind. I suppose Meldrum told you that I intend to waylay you this year with 20 000 words more (after Jim); the beginning of a new vol: If I can get my weapon ready I shall; for, joke as I may about it, it is a question of life and death.

Pardon all this twaddle and the untidy aspect of the sheets. They've been filling my inkstand for me—with the best intentions, no doubt.

Believe me My dear Sir always very faithfully Yours

JPH. CONRAD.

[*Opposite paragraph on Zack*] Isn't it a funny coincidence me following Zack on essentially the same subject? I hope nobody will suspect Maga of having started a 'literary' competition for the best story on the State of Funk and that Zack and I rivalize for the possession of a nickel-plated chronometer or a lath-and-plaster palace, or whatever other 'literary' rewards are going now in the great world of democracy.

⁶ See letter of 8 November 1899, below.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | Monday. 9. AM.
[30 October 1899]

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM

I am sending by this post (to the office) another 16 pp of *Jim*; I've got a good few more written—and I have no fear as to the rest. I was very glad of your letter and the good news about yourself and your 'House' as an Arab would say.

The post before I had a very friendly letter from Mr B'wood with enclosure (£50) on account of Jim. I wrote immediately a long letter in reply. So far all's well. He seems to like the story.

As you said I might put it off I do not immediately discharge my debt to you—putting it off till the story is finished. It is very convenient to me and I need not tell you—indeed I could not express it adequately—how sensible I am of your good offices, of your patience with me, of your kindness.

I've returned all the proofs and forwarded more copy to Edinburgh. My mind is eased by what you say about Jim's length. It would be to my interest to cut it short as possible, but I would just as soon think of cutting off my head. With kind regards from us both | Always yours

JPH. CONRAD.

PS Last inst^t of fair copy received; it goes north in a day or two.

[In Meldrum's hand] Ack^d 1/11/99

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 8th Nov 99

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Criticism is poor work, and to expose the weaknesses of humanity as exhibited in literary (?) work is a thankless and futile task. I've always thought that Macaulay's smashing of R. Montgomery's poems (!)¹ was a pathetic example of mighty truth

¹ Robert Montgomery (1807-1855), whose *Omnipresence of the Deity* provoked Macaulay's attack in the *Edinburgh Review*, April, 1830.

powerless before the falsehood of pretences, like the great sea before a very small rock. To point out to the crowd beauties not manifest to the common eye, to flash the light of one's sympathetic perception upon great, if not obvious, qualities, and even upon generous failings that hold the promise of better things this is indeed a toil worthy of a man's pen, a task that would repay for the time given up, for the strenght expended for that sadness that comes of thinking over the sincere endeavour of a soul—for ever debarred from attaining perfection. But the blind distribution of praise or blame, done with a light heart and an empty mind, which is of the very essence of 'periodical' criticism seems to me to be a work less useful than skirt-dancing and not quite as honourable as pocket-picking.

There is too a sort of curse upon the critical exercise of human thought. Should one attempt honestly an analysis of another man's production it is ten to one, that one will get the credit for all sorts of motives except for that of sincere conviction; this is the taint of the literary life; and though writing to you I would not expose myself to the risk of being misunderstood I prefer to say nothing critical about John Buchan's story. I am willing to admit it is grammatically written—(I know nothing of grammar myself as he who runs may see)—if anybody desires to make that assertion. I do happen however to know one or two things that might conceivably be found to have a bearing upon the story and <up> on these I shall hold my peace.

There is one thing (though hardly pertaining to criticism proper) which ought to be said of that—production. It is this: its idea, its feeling, its suggestion *and even the most subtly significant incidents* have been wrenched alive out of Kipling's <story> tale "*The finest Story in the World.*"² What became

² Charlie Mears, the London bank clerk, loses his memory of previous incarnations when in this present life he first falls in love. Accordingly, the finest story in the world, that concerned with "our first and most beautiful wooings" in some prenatal existence, can never be written. See *The Works of Rudyard Kipling*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898, V, 150. The idea of metempsychosis does not enter into Buchan's fantasy. The conflict in both stories is, however, vaguely the same—that between dream and reality. Colin Raden, charming but decadent scion of an ancient Scottish

of the idea, of the feeling, of the suggestion and of the incidents, in the process of that wrenching I leave it for the pronouncement not of posterity but of any contemporary mind that would be brought (for less than ten minutes) to the consideration of Mr Buchan's story. The thing is patent—it is the only impression that remains after reading the last words—it argues naïveness of an appalling kind or else a most serene impudence. I write strongly—because I feel strongly.

One does not expect style, construction, or even common intelligence in the fabrication of story; but one has the right to demand some sort of sincerity and to expect common honesty. When that fails—what remains?

If my remarks are unwelcome I can only express my regret without in the least apologising for my opinion. No amount of money would have extracted it from me—I have hardly time enough to think of and combat my own shortcomings—but at your request I've found leisure to set it down here and it must be accepted for what it is worth. Some men who *can* write (and even one or two who *sell*) do me the honour to say that it is worth something—at least to them.

I shall *without fail* dispatch tomorrow the Corr^d proofs of the Dec^{er} instalment—and also some more typed matter. The Jan^r number of Jim is practically ready and Feb^r is on the way to completion. The March issue will see the end of the story—and of the Vol:

I don't think that these 20000 words I've been threatening you with for this year have the slightest chance of coming to light. Just now it is all for Jim! And no amount of sacrifice seems too much for him.

house, grew up on a lonely coast and ever thereafter had a "romance in his brain"—a vision of far islands beyond the Rim of Mist. At school, at Oxford, in the guards, he never lost this private means of escape from reality; and when dying on the battlefield, he was overheard to mutter words about his island paradise. See "The Far Islands," *Blackwood's*, 166 (1899), 609. A slight parallel exists perhaps between Mears' dreams of rowing first as a Greek galley-slave, then as a Viking, and Raden's dreams of voyaging alone in his long rough boat.

I trust you are well—as well as the truly awful weather permits. I am holding my own tolerably well against the winds and rains that beat upon the Pent. Always faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 9th Nov 99

DEAR MR MELDRUM.

Many many thanks for the copy of the stories. It *does* look a nice book and I am glad to have it by me to work <at> upon at odd times.¹

I took the liberty to send you a lady a Mrs <Ritchie> Blake who has some jolly good stories which she wishes to place in *Maga* if possible.² I've written her a letter of introduction (to you) which I am forwarding today. (she will probably call on Monday in Paternoster Row.)

There is a lot of Jim in MS and you shall have it soon.

Always yours

JPH. CONRAD.

¹ "Youth" and "Heart of Darkness" had been set in book form in anticipation of the reception of "Jim: a Sketch," which was completing the "Three Tales of Land and Sea." See letter of 15 May 1900, below.

² Sketches of Rhodesian life. Garnett, 156.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 9th Nov 99.

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

This is to introduce Mrs Blake of 24 Montague Street wc. She has one or two stories which she wishes to submit to Mr Blackwood for *Maga*, and she would like them to be considered as quickly as possible.

I have the less hesitation in asking you to do all you can in

the matter because Edward Garnett thinks very highly indeed of Mrs Blake's work and has in fact advised her to come to you.

I am yours very faithfully

JPH. CONRAD.

[*In Meldrum's hand*] Nov 16/99

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 20 November 1899*]

. . . I hope to ask Conrad and his wife to spend a day or two with us at Christmas, or about then, and bring their little boy with them. He, I am sure, would like a little change from Pent Farm. We'll see. I had hoped to get hold of Buchan and bring him and Conrad together—but not now!

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 25 Nov 99.

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

I was very glad to hear from you and your invitation is most delightful enticing and irresistible. We shall certainly come if Mrs Meldrum—to whom pray convey our thanks—can put up with us for two days.

Yes. Every day making the children older, delay in this can may [*sic*] make things easier for your wife. You must choose a time quite convenient to you and give us notice.

I am still at Jim. I've sent 6 more pages yesterday. I shall send 7 more today to end Chap XIII. The Story will be finished of course this year. I trust they will give me as much space as possible in the Jan. Febr. & Mch numbers. I shall want all I can get.

I've sent last proofs to E'gh the other day and can't have more till they get further copy. I am sorry Mrs Blake won't do for Maga. She is no friend of mine in any real sense. I thought her work (what I had seen of it) had something real—very real, in it.

I trust Mr B'wood has not been offended by a critical letter I wrote about that story by Buchan in the last N° of *Maga*.¹ I did hit hard but then Mr Blackwood asked me to say what I thought of it. I considered it an outrageous performance and speaking confidentially—in a way—made no secret of my opinion. In fact I shouted it out. Being a person of no consequence the noise I make when I am hurt (and bad work *hurts* when you set yourself to think over it seriously) need not disturb any one very much. And I am not forward with my opinions either.

With kindest regard from us both to Mrs Meldrum and yourself I am always faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

[*In Meldrum's hand*] Ans. Nov. 27, 1899

¹ See letter of 8 November 1899, above.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 3^d Dec 99

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

A terrible misfortune happening to my oldest english friends has completely upset all our plans and jumbled my thoughts. Their eldest son has been killed last Tuesday night on the Essex marshes. He was a promising boy seventeen and his death is made more bitter to them by the appalling circumstances of his end.¹ The spot where he was found is not quite a mile from the Farm where we used to live.

On receipt of news we rushed off to see them and returned home the same day. The poor people have not realized yet their loss and I fear a breakdown by and by for them both. I have urged them to come here and stay with us for sometime.

¹ Fountaine Hope, son of G. F. W. Hope, of Stanford-le-Hope, left his home on the evening of 28 November to fetch his sculls. Early the next morning his body, beaten and stripped, was found in a ditch on the Essex marshes. No evidence of a struggle could be found in any spot. Baffled, the coroner's jury returned an open verdict. See *Essex Weekly News*, 15 December 1899, 5.

I am sure Mrs Meldrum and yourself <will understand> will understand why it is impossible for us to keep our engagement. But if you would have us in Jan^y for a day we shall be more than delighted to come.

I am awfully cut up. It has checked my work for two days but now the grind goes on. Many thanks for your letter. In the matter of space—if Maga gives room in Jan^y N^o to all all *nearly all* [sic] of the copy I am sending to-morrow the end of the story may be divided between the Febr^y and March numbers. Forgive my stupid letter. I can write my stuff but feel quite incapable to concentrate my thought upon any other sort of writing

Kindest regards from us both to your wife and yourself. I am | Always yours

J. CONRAD.

[In Meldrum's hand] Dec. 6/99

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | Sunday
[17 December 1899]

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

I send here a MS lot of Jim which would be most of the Febr^y instalment. My poor wife is too taken up just now with domestic worries to be able to type for me and I do not want to stop the trickle of copy.

The lot published and in proof together as present in Edinburgh amounts to 40000 words already. I trust I am not making myself objectionable by unduly lengthening my contribution. As things go now there will be no hurry to publish the book early next year? Or am I mistaken? I have been so upset by the <war> turn of this war as to be hindered in my work.¹

If my calculation of 40000 words (now set up) is correct (and I cannot be very far wrong) then I've written up to the

¹ General Buller's forces had met with a serious reverse at the Battle of the Tugela. See the *Times*, 16 December 1899, 7.

value of £ 100 advanced me by Mr B'wood. I would be glad—if at all feasible—to have £ 20 further on acct/. I am ashamed to everlastingly proclaim my destitution—and weary of the thing itself. The balance I would get on delivery of the conclusion. I still think I shall finish the story this year. With kindest regards from us both to Mrs. Meldrum and yourself | I am always yours

JPH CONRAD.

[*In Meldrum's hand*] Ans. Dec. 18/99 [a Monday]

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, Monday,
18 (December) 1899*]

. . . I have received a bigger batch of Conrad's story which I am sending to the type-writer. I enclose you a letter from himself which I have received, it will be easier than paraphrasing it myself, and indeed this bad business about South Africa makes one unable to settle and to write clearly.

I may explain that the domestic worries referred to, as I understand, are that they have asked down to stay with them the father and mother of a young gentleman who was found dead in the Essex marshes. The family are Conrad's oldest friends in England and the manner of the son's death is still a mystery which the coroners inquest has failed to resolve.

The Conrads' visit to us has therefore been put off till January. The rest of the letter explains itself. . . .

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George Street | Edinburgh, decr 22. 99

DEAR MR. CONRAD,

I was glad to receive more "copy" of "Lord Jim" and now have the pleasure of enclosing you a further instalment of £ 20 on account. I have not calculated the length exactly, as we can square up when you send me the final chapters. Glad to hear you are within sight of the end. The story I think makes good progress and promises to come out well. It will probably be

April before I can publish the last instalment as I was obliged to shorten the January part from what was settled upon, owing to pressure upon my space caused by some long articles which could not be longer delayed.

Yours very truly,

(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD

Joseph Conrad Esq.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 26th Dec 99

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Many thanks for your friendly letter with enclosure (£ 20) which came to hand this morning. I wished to time my letter to you for the New Year's day and to send together with the most sincere wishes of happiness and prosperity some good report of the tale.

The tale progresses and in five more days' time it will be still nearer the end which seems well in view now. I say seems, because I do suffer at times from optical delusions (and others) where my work is concerned.

I mentioned the number of words in my letter to Meldrum in a casual way and not in the least because I thought it any justification for my request or any argument for you granting the same. I turned to you with perfect confidence remembering how generously ready you were last year—when all the words were counted and there were no more to come.

What made me allude to words too was my preoccupation as to the forthcoming volume. It'll be a fat book—and not, perhaps, well balanced to the eye. Still we are in for it now I fancy. *Lord Jim* would have hardly the length and certainly has not the substance to stand alone; and the three tales, each being inspired by a similar moral idea (or is it only one of my optical delusions?) will make (in that sense) a homogeneous book. Of the matter I am not ashamed and the

mere size won't, I hope, militate against such commercial success as is within my reach.

And so this year which began with work for you ends also with copy for *Maga* on my table. Nothing can please me better; and it is also a fact that of my year's writing all that's worth anything is gone to you. You have helped me through these twelve months in more than one sense, for the conditions of our intercourse made work easier to me. There are of course other pages scribbled over—pages not destined for the 'House' but I can't pretend to look upon them with satisfaction.¹ Their existence does not cheer me—it frightens me rather—for everything is dangerous that has even ever so little doubt in it, that dims the guiding light of one's confidence.

The war disturbed me not a little. I do not share the slightly frantic state of the press. They write as if they had expected the soldiers to run and the Empire to collapse and can't possess their souls for joy that these things did not happen. To me, seeing the initial nonsuccess the development of the National Will on the lines of unflinching resolution seemed from the first as inevitable as the preordained motions of the stars. It may be that I do not know enough of England and that the journalists have very good reasons for that jubilation which strikes me as unseemly. At any rate it is expressed so stupidly that it is exasperating to a man whose faith <was> is as deep as the sea and more stable.

And on this I shall close this interminable letter and turn to the MS to grind out another page or two. I am spending Xmas not forgotten certainly, but very solitary. It is all the better for my work. Festivities jumble my crazy thoughts and visitors leave me as a rule in a state bordering upon idiocy. Believe me dear M^r Blackwood very faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

¹ *The Rescue.*

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 3^d Jan 1900

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

I hope you have all begun the year in good health and with easy minds. May luck and happiness attend you as long as the years keep rolling.

I am sending by this post a batch of MS. Lord Jim to end Ch XVII. Of course the chap.^s are short.

The next batch should be the last, unless I were to forward an instalment before the 15th inst^t.

L.J. is a rather bad business for me on account of its length that is to say. Otherwise I am pleased with it and, I think, with some shadow of a reason.

But the artistic pleasure is neither here nor there. Bread is the thing

When the end is delivered I hope Mr Blackwood will be kind enough to send me at least £80 (100 if possible). I have innumerable bills flapping about my ears! Thereupon I shall proceed to write 20000 words (either *A seaman* or *First Command*¹ or a *Skittish Cargo*² or any two of them to make up the number) for publication serially when he thinks fit and convenient (if you only knew how sick I am of this contriving and of being always behind!) when we shall see how we stand for words v. sovereigns. By that time the book shall be out too, perhaps and fallen into the bottomless hole as likely as not. Well never mind. Some day, something will come up out of the pit.

Drop me a line as to yourself and family. Borys is not at all well with a cold and a cough. The Grown-ups are so so.

With my duty to Mrs Meldrum I am always yours

JPH CONRAD.

[In Meldrum's hand] Ans. 8/1/1900

¹ See letter to Meldrum, 14 February 1899, footnote, above.

² Doubtless the same as "‘Equitable Division’ (a story of a typhoon)."
Idem.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood & Sons, London*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 7 Jan 1900

Messrs Wm Blackwood & Sons London

DEAR SIRs.

Herewith further inst^l of Lord Jim p 376-394. Chap xviii.

I trust you've received all eight previous inst^{ns} p. 342-375 sent by registered packet.

When returning <copy> MS and type kindly register or keep back MS till <copy> type is received as in case of loss we would have no other copy available.

I am dear Sirs | very faithfully yours

JOSEPH CONRAD.

[*In Meldrum's hand*] Ans. 9/1/1900

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | Tuesday.

[9 January 1900]

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

I fully intended to let you know in my last letter that Mr B'wood had written to me and sent £20 which I received on Xmas day I believe.

My wife and I are very much distressed at her apparent neglect in answering Mrs Meldrum's letter; but the fact is that we had not the letter. Whether I—after extracting your note—have dropped the envelope with Mrs Meldrum's message into the waste paper basket, I can't say. It would be just like me—my wife says. Unless we didn't get your last letter at all—which is just barely possible. Most likely it isn't the P. O. but I who am the culprit. Pray present my apologies to Mrs Meldrum and Jessie's expressions of regret. I really ought to have a nurse—since my wife must look also after the other child, to say nothing of the everlasting cooking.

I've sent off last Friday another inst^l of *Jim* Ch xviii rather longer than either of the three previous ones. I am driving on with the story and you may expect another Chap: shortly. And

then the end! I do wish for the end. After the end a visit to you—if convenient. Even if Jess couldn't come I would take a run up to town. But the pressing necessity to write more hangs over me. I don't know when and how I will ever fight my way back to the *Rescue*. I try not to think of it.

With our kind regards to your wife and yourself I am always yours

JPH. CONRAD.

[*In Meldrum's hand*] Ans. 15/1/1900 [a Monday]

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

[Stanford] 15 Jan 1900

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

Just a line to tell you I've found Mrs Meldrum's and your own letter amongst the pages of returned *MS*! I had never looked for anything from you thinking the envelope was dispatched from the office.

You must have thought me wretchedly ungrateful—while the truth is I am immensely touched by the warm tone of your New Year's message. I do not know how to tell you how much I appreciate every proof of your friendly feeling—and you have given me not a little of them. I reciprocate with all my heart every wish of yours.

Post waits. | Ever yours most sincerely CONRAD.
Jessie is going to write

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

[Stanford] Thursday. [8 February 1900]

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

Since the 25 of Jan I've been ill. Ten days in bed and it is only today that I managed to leave my bedroom.

Bad! Thank God tho' there is enough copy ahead to keep

Maga going. They've been sending me proofs of the book¹ but I haven't had the strength to look at them yet I shall do so to-day perhaps.

I can't write any longer. Believe me always | yours

JPH CONRAD.

[In Meldrum's hand] Ans. 11/2/00 [a Sunday]

¹ Proofs of *Lord Jim* for the volume of *Three Tales of Land and Sea*. See letter of 9 November 1899, above.

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 12 Febr 1900

MY DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

I've had an exceedingly rough time of it since the 25th of last month when beginning with a severe fit of malaria I continued with bronchities and an attack of gout,¹ giving my wife a variety entertainment. The poor woman can hardly stand, and as to myself I managed yesterday to totter downstairs for the first time

This sorry news will explain my delay in returning proofs of Maga: and book, and the stoppage of further copy.

To-day (monday) I send off proofs of chap. xvi and xvii and also proofs of book up to page 208² I have yet ch xviii in proof, which I shall forward very soon together with two more chap^{rs} of copy. After these another two chapters will see the end of Jim.

You have no idea what an anxious time I had. The illness looked much more serious than it has turned out to be and the thought of 'copy' nearly distracted me. All's well that ends well.

Believe me dear Mr Blackwood always very faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

¹ Conrad's later account of the cause of this illness: "I am awfully sickened by 'public affairs'. They made me positively ill in Febr'y last. Ten days in bed and six weeks of suspended animation." To R. B. Cunninghame Graham, 28 July 1900. MS: Dartmouth College Library.

² *Three Tales of Land and Sea*.

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George Street | Edinburgh, 13th Feb'y 1900

DEAR MR CONRAD

I am so sorry to hear of your severe attack, & that you still feel so weak. I sympathize very much with both you & Mrs Conrad under it, & you will both I trust get some rest now & regain your strength. I can understand how the story would weigh upon your mind during your illness, & I hope you will not let it worry you during your convalescence. In march I propose using chapters 12 and 13, so there will be sufficient left for April & May, in which number I think you should be able to wind up the story.

If it would be a convenience to you for me to send you another payment to account of the story I shall be happy to do so, if you will let me know. I am writing from home, & do not know how we stand, but we can square up when the "copy" is completed, and we can tell the exact length.

With kind regards, & all good wishes for your speedy recovery, Believe me, always yours sincerely,

(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD

Joseph Conrad Esq

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | Tuesday.

14 Febr 1900

MY DEAR M^r MELDRUM

Ever so many thanks for your letter. I am able to write you that I am somewhat better but still cast down a bit. In an hour we shall leave here to go to H. G. Wells for two days. It'll do me good I think and perhaps when I get back I shall be able to grapple with pen ink and paper. I haven't done anything yet tho' my head is full (too full) of Jim's end but when it comes to putting it down black on white the brain wanders. When I start 10 days will be enough to finish the thing.

I've sent 208 pp. of proofs corrected for book and also proofs for *Maga* of ch: xvi xvii. I've been able to do that much anyhow. I've also written a few lines to Mr Blackwood.

If I could get £20 it would be a great convenience for my balance is very near zero; this worries one—you know.

With kindest regards from us both to Mrs Meldrum and yourself believe me | Always yours

JPH. CONRAD.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 16 February 1900*]

. . . On my return from Edinburgh I got a letter from Conrad that he was ill, and knowing the nervous condition of the man I delayed pressure on him to wind up "Jim". I am sorry that the length of "Jim" doesn't suit *Maga* which I can well understand; but, on the other hand, it makes it a more important story—it is a great story now—and in the annals of *Maga* half a century hence it will be one of the honourable things to record of her that she entertained "Jim". I only wish that "Charlotte"¹ whom you are good enough to honour with permit to follow in "Jim's" steps were at all likely to do the old lady such credit. . . .

¹ Meldrum's *The Conquest of Charlotte*, Blackwood's, July 1901-July 1902.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 20th Febr 1900.

DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD.

Many thanks for your letter. When it arrived here I was away in Sandgate (only seven miles from here) staying with H. G. Wells for a much needed change.

It has done me some good so that yesterday I got hold of Jim again. When I get into the stride a fortnight will see the end of the story, though I shall not hurry myself since the end of a story is a very important and difficult part; the *most* difficult

for me, to execute—that is. It is always *thought out* before the story is begun.

The last proof and some more *copy* shall be sent in a couple of days.

As to your very kind offer of some money the truth is <I've> I had already written to Mr Meldrum asking whether it was feasible. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your kindness which seems proof against all my wearisome imperfections.

Believe me, dear Sir always very faithfully yours

JOSEPH CONRAD.

[*In Blackwood's hand*] £3.3 per 1000

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George Street | Edinb. 23. 2. 00

DEAR MR CONRAD

I am glad to hear you had been away for a change & feel so much better for it and able to tackle "Jim" again. I hope however, you will not overdo it at first. As you say the end of a story is always the most trying part for a writer. Thank you for promise of proof and fresh copy on an early date.

I have now the pleasure of enclosing you cheque for £40 on account of the story.

Hoping you will continue to improve steadily Yours Very Truly

Signed WM. BLACKWOOD

Joseph Conrad Esq

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

The Pent, | Stanford | Nr Hythe. | 26th Febr 1900.

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Many thanks for the cheque for £40 in further payment on acct of *Lord Jim* which I received this morning.

I am at work at last. Proofs leave here to-morrow morning together with 2 new Chap:

I trust I shall be a credit to Maga with Lord Jim—even to the very end. I mean to try hard.

Believe me, dear M^r Blackwood, always very faithfully yours
[signature cut from letter]

[Conrad to Meldrum]

The pent. | Stanford. N^r Hythe. | 3 Mch 1900

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

If I didn't write to you I did write a little—as much as I could. Now I send you 14 pp. of pretty rough MS to be typed in two copies and I shall keep up that kind of dribble if you don't mind so as to write and revise at the same time for greater speed in getting the copy ready for the press. I've 'got hold' again, thank God. It seemed at first as though I had written my last line.

I have, inexcusably, neglected to let you know of Mr. B'wood's cheque (£40), which reached me a few days ago, and was made very welcome. Though, speaking frankly, I don't doubt I am giving Mr B'wood the equivalent of his money I am very touched by his patient acceptance of my unpunctuality and by his readiness to respond to my demands. I hope he does not doubt it.

I do long for a pause—but I am afraid my illness has done away with my holiday. I must drive on. One decent success with a book would give me a chance to breathe freely. But will it ever come? I fear that from this <one> vol: I must not expect relief. There's the War!

I trust Mrs Meldrum yourself and the children are all well. My wife sends her kind regards Believe me always yours

JPH CONRAD.

[In Meldrum's hand] Ans.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 3 Ap. 1900

MY DEAR M^r MELDRUM.

I am sending a fresh inst. of *Jim* and now I start to write the last chap.

I don't know how my answer was taken in Edinburg[h] and what they meant by this inquiry. As a matter of fact they have already—(considering the length of each inst^t/) enough matter for *two* numbers.

I've been horribly disappointed by the shortness of the inst^t in the Ap N^o the more so that the break just there destroyed an effect. If one only could do without serial publication! Don't think me an ungrateful beast. Jim is very near my heart. I don't apologize now for springing on M^r Blackwood such a long affair and for the unfortunate dragging manner of its production. Apologies butter no parsnips—to adapt the popular saying. It won't happen again.

My story in collaboration with H.[ueffer] seems to have produced a very good impression on Heine:[mann]'s and McClure's readers.¹ There's something in it no doubt. *What*, exactly, I can't say myself.

I am always thinking of a *long* book for M^r Blackwood and, if the collaboration stuff goes well, the thing shall be managed sooner than I hoped for. The *R* shall be finished before long—and then we shall see what can be done for the *House*.

Meantime what I want M^r Blackwood to do is to advance me on completed delivery of *Jim* something like £150. Of course that will over pay *Jim* a lot, but I shall at once write something that will reduce if not extinguish the surplus. Only I have pressing liabilities to discharge just now.

Please pardon this constant screwing. Fact is I can't help it.

¹ *The Inheritors* was published first by McClure, Phillips & Co., New York, then by William Heinemann, Ltd., in 1901. Keating, 76, 86. Ford Madox Ford estimated that Conrad's contribution had not been over 2000 words. See his *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Reminiscence*, London: Duckworth, 1924, 134.

Jim shall be finished by the 12th inst and I shall want the cash then.

Well this is the end for the present of the old tune. I shall certainly run up to see you directly Jim is finished.

Believe me | Always yours

JPH CONRAD.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 12 Ap. 1900

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Yesterday I sent off the Edinburgh proofs of *Maga* and book, together with an instalment of typewritten matter, and to London a batch of further MS. I feel the need of telling you that I've done something anyway and to assure you that *Lord Jim* has an end, which last I am afraid you may be beginning to doubt. It has though—and I am now trying to write it out. A dog's life! this writing out, this endlessness of effort and this endless discontent; with remorse thrown in, for the massacre of so many good intentions.

This by the way. The real object of this letter is to tell you that should you find Jim unconscionably long (for *Maga*—I mean) I am ready to shorten (what remains) by excision. I am however in such a state of mind about the story—so inextricably mixed up with it in my daily life—that I feel unequal to doing the cutting myself; so, addressing you in your character of Editor of *Maga*, I declare my readiness to make conscientious joints, if the parts that can be taken out are marked for me and the MS with such indications is returned. I would not keep it for more than a day or two—and, as (I trust) you will have the story complete in a week or so, there would be time to look through it before the copy is required for setting up.

Perhaps you've heard that Hueffer and I have finished a novel on collaboration. I did not show it to Mr Meldrum for two and even three reasons. First of all I did not wish to offer you a work in its nature necessarily tentative—an initial ex-

periment, in fact. The second reason was my running actually singlehanded in Maga and of course my partner and myself are very anxious for serial publication. The third reason for you not having had the refusal of these first-fruits is that you have (virtually) a book of mine while poor Heineman[n] (who had been awfully decent to me) has nothing to show for his decency but a few receipts for moneys paid out and half a novel which is hung up, to ripen—I trust.¹ He seemed very anxious to see it. I am not enthusiastic about it myself but it seems to have hit Heinemann's readers in a soft spot, and M^r Stephen Gwynn (on behalf of McClure) has delivered a favourable judgement. Well—as our good friends the Russians say—"God give them health and the rank of generals." If this goes down well with the public we shall try our hand at an adventure story of which the skeleton is set up—with some modelling here and there already worked up.²

I hope your health does not suffer from this cold and blustering spring. I've had something in the nature of a slight relapse in march, but am very fit now. Believe me dear M^r Blackwood always very faithfully yours.

JPH. CONRAD.

¹ *The Rescue*.

² For a synopsis of *Seraphina* and the promise to have this skeleton "greatly advanced if not absolutely finished in July, 1899," see Keating, 131-133.

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George Street | Edin April 24th 1900

DEAR MR CONRAD

What with the Easter Holiday, the new number of Maga, I have been unable to write to you.

I was glad to receive a further instalment of "Lord Jim". I have now the pleasure of enclosing you proof in duplicate.

I do not think the story loses anything by the method of telling. I would not recommend any cutting down in these three chapters merely for the sake of bringing the serial issue to an earlier close. The end must now justify the length of the story,

& to hurry it up for any reason but the right one be assured would be a mistake. I therefore as heretofore leave you a free hand with regard to it. But do not from anything I have said expand it to a greater length than you have already sketched out.

I was very interested to hear of your new work written in collaboration with Mr Hueffer, & I hope it will prove a great success. I think you did right to give it to Mr Heineman[n]. I shall, however be very pleased to have the offer of the Adventure story, if it comes off, whether you write it yourself or in conjunction with Mr Hueffer.

I have the pleasure of enclosing you cheque for Twenty five Pounds in further payment for the serial issue of "Lord Jim".

Yours very Truly

Signed WM BLACKWOOD

Joseph Conrad Esq

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 26th Ap 1900

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

I hurry up to catch this post. Fact is I only opened the envelope from Edinburgh this moment thinking it contained only the proofs. Somehow it did not occur to me it might have contained a letter from you—still less the enclosure.

Many thanks for the cheque for £25. You need not for a moment apprehend I would extend the story, but I am immensely pleased with what you say about there being no necessity for cutting down what remains.

Both my partner and myself would be delighted if our adventure story seemed to you worthy of *Maga*.¹

My wrist (left one thank God) is swollen to the size of an ordinary ankle. You may imagine how I enjoyed the process of swelling. This has been a bad year for me. However as usual in such attacks my head is clear and having the use of

¹ *Seraphina*.

my right hand I can manage to write, with a heavy paperweight to hold the sheet. I've only lost one day.

Thanks for your kind inquiries. Believe me, dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours

JPH CONRAD.

[William Blackwood and Sons to Conrad]

15 May 1900

DEAR SIR.

We duly received to-day the revised proof of the Magazine portion of Lord Jim and a further instalment of copy, namely, chapters 28, 29, 30 and the beginning of 31. The story has now exceeded the original estimate of its extent and Mr. Blackwood has had under his consideration the exact publication of Lord Jim and the other two stories "Youth" and Heart of Darkness. The printers started the book form of these stories on a comparatively close page on the understanding the Lord Jim would end with at the latest the June number of *Maga*. But we now find that even in this close page Lord Jim will run to at least 320 pages and we conclude from the portion you sent today that there is still a further instalment to come which may possibly add 10 pages more to the book. In consultation with Mr. Blackwood to-day he indicates that the proof returned this morning and the new copy will run him into the August number of the magazine at least if not also into September and he suggests that it would be advisable to your interest as well as in his own that Lord Jim should be made a separate volume and be published not later than the middle of September by which time the last instalment will have appeared in *Maga* or at any rate there will be little more of the serial issue to follow that date.

This suggestion of course somewhat alters the arrangement for the volume "Three tales of Sea and Land" but we presume there will be no difficulty on your part in allowing Youth and Heart of Darkness (which are now set up in type and of which plates have been made) to lie in our hands until you are able to add one or two more stories which would make up a reason-

able crown 8vo volume to sell at 6/—or may be 3/6. We should tell you that on thinking over this matter Mr Blackwood advised us to write to Mr MacArthur the agent for Doubleday & McClure and lay this view before him. In reply Mr McArthur fully endorsed our opinion that Lord Jim would be likely to meet with better success under separate publication than in a volume of short stories, and we would wish now to have your approval of the proposal when we would at one [once] arrange with Mr McArthur and fix the date, say the 15th September, for the publication of the story. We are

Yours truly,

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD & SONS

J Conrad Esq.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

Pent Farm | Stanford | Hythe. | 19th May 1900.

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM. I enclose here the letter I received from Ed'gh last night. I daresay you know all about it anyhow. I wired in reply "*Think arrangement suggested judicious. Conclusion in a few days*"—both statements being true enough. I think it judicious but can't profess myself pleased. I've felt that something of the kind would have to be done, though, and I am not unreasonably upset. Now the proposal has come from Mr Blackwood the thing seems unavoidable. Perhaps the story will please. Perhaps! I would like to know what you think. I am too fond of it myself to be very hopeful. It has not been planned to stand alone. *H of D* was meant in my mind as a foil, and *Youth* was supposed to give the note. All this is foolishness—no doubt. The public does not care—can not possibly care—for foils and notes. But it cares for stories and *Jim* is as near a story as I will ever get. The title will have to be altered to *Lord Jim. A tale*—instead of *A sketch*. And yet it is a sketch! I would like to put it as *A simple tale A plain tale*—something of the sort—if possible. No matter.

I think that the conditions of production should be altered a

little. I wouldn't think about it, much less say anything, if it was not a matter of self-preservation almost. I must be enabled to draw breath or I will choke. I've been gasping for months now and doing my best all the time too. The question is what Mr Blackwood will do for me? What I suggest would be this:—

Lord Jim should be considered separately of course. It will be (it seems incredible) of, apparently, 100000 words or very little short of that. In fact it shall take the place really of that *second book* to follow 3 tales which we have talked over and which was to be paid at the rate of £5 p. 1000 (serial) with a shilling royalty <and> but *no* advance on book form.¹ However the circumstances are not the same if only for the reason it is going to appear first—and besides *Lord Jim* was not meant when we settled the terms. On the other hand it is a long story—a novel—and this, I am told, is an advantage from the publisher's point of view. What I would propose then would be that Mr Blackwood should pay me at the rate of £5 p 1000 but that of the whole sum £200* should be put as on account of a shilling royalty. This would make the serial payment (assuming 100,000 words) to be at the rate of £3 p. 1000—10/-higher than the serial rate of the short stories volume that was to be. I engage myself to furnish between 30 and 40 thousand words to complete the vol: of stories at the old rate of £2.10 per thousand if Mr Blackwood should wish to use these serially. But as Maga has been pretty full of Conrad of late I would try to serialise them elsewhere reserving them for Mr Blackwood's vol without any further payment—naturally—since *that* volume has been already paid for.

I ask for these terms with the less hesitation because I know that Mr X . . . (pardon this discretion) would give me £200 <for> on acc^t of royalties for a long book. Hang Mr X. The fact is I don't hesitate because if I hesitate I am lost—like many a better man; and if I AM worth anything I had rather

* *The Nigger* which seems to be selling yet has brought me (at 17½ %) nearly that amount.

¹ See letter of 31 July 1899, above.

be helped over the stile by Mr Blackwood than by any publisher in the three kingdoms. The long and the short of it is I want £300 to pay my debts (which are not great but very awful) and to go abroad for a couple of months. I fear I must go, and that soon, or I shall become a complete idiot. My nerves are like fiddle strings. I think of going to Bruges directly I deliver the last of *Jim*. Hueffer is going too and we shall bring two-thirds of a novel from there or the devil's in it! Should <Lord> the length of *Lord Jim* not cover my demands Mr Blackwood would always have that collaboration novel to fall back upon. (He said he would like to see it). But the crux is that I must have (from somewhere) the 300 in question. For *L. J.* I had already £165 I think—maybe more; (my wife is out for the day and has locked her drawer so I am not certain). I had £65 this year and fancy a 100 (or 130?) last year.

Of course I am aware that Mr Blackwood may with perfect fairness return to the original plan. In that case I say—very well. Let the whole thing appear in Sept^{er} or never appear. I am so utterly weary of myself (not of my work) that I verily believe I don't care. I ought to have been writing MS instead of this. There's a tidy pile ready and it seems good stuff too. *Lord Jim* brings me letters. From Spain to day! They take in Maga in Madrid. Where is it they don't take Maga! Believe me Always yours JOSEPH CONRAD.

PS I would be rather anxious to know the result of this.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 22 May 1900

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

I can easily imagine how awfully you must be bored with all these affairs; and yet my very good sir I even must have another go at you. You will perceive that I have no option and indeed I trust you are not angry with me for worrying you.

It is of course my earnest desire that you would communicate

with Mr Blackwood in respect of the arrangements I propose. Herewith I enclose a statement of the position as I see it; and the matter is pressing. I stated my view on a separate piece of paper so that you may forward it to Ed'gh if you judge it expedient.

And now I must go back to the *MS*. I write no letters to anybody. People think I am dead. Now the thing comes out alone I must modify the end a little bit.

Yes. Your remarks are just. The book would have been ill-balanced, and I think I've good matter ("First Command"¹ especially) <which> for the volume of *Tales*. It will turn out to be a record of personal experience purely. Just as well—maybe!

Always most gratefully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

Draft of arrangements and payments for Lord Jim and Volume of Tales follows.

A *Three Tales*. Conditions: £2.10 p 1000 words for serial pub and £100 ad^{ves} for a volume (of about 70000 words.)

Youth—paid for { serial appearance. (about 50000 words).
H of D—paid for {

(Lord Jim was included in this arrangement.) *partly paid for* as serial. The *book form* has also been PAID FOR already.

B Then we planned another book of short tales 70,000 words for which the terms were: £5 per thousand words serially. Royalty 1/-per copy. *No advance* on publication.

Instead of which *Lord Jim* (of about 100000 words) is to appear as a long novel. Therefore let us <consider> leave the work A to be finished on the old conditions at a future time by one or two tales, to complete the number of words agreed upon, to make a 6/-volume. A is PAID FOR unless Mr Blackwood desires the balance of it to appear serially in *Maga* when he shall pay £2.10 per thousand of further copy.

A then remains unfinished for the time and *Lord Jim* takes the place of B with the following modifications of terms:—

£300 for appearance *serially* and £200 for the *book form* on acc^t of 1/-per copy royalty. Mr Blackwood on delivery of completed MS (for which I've received already payments on acc^t to the amount of nearly (or quite) £200) shall pay me £300 as balance of serial rights and <the> *advance on book-form*. He shall publish the book at such date as he thinks <fit> best for his interests.

PS I engage myself to furnish balance of copy for Volume A within a year from Lord Jim's appearance in book form.

PS You see from the statement that in consideration of Jim being an unexpected development, I, *by no means*, ask for it to be paid at the rate of £5 per 1000 *serially*. The most I ask for is an <adva> increase of 10/- on the serial rate agreed for A. If you think that this is too much you may perhaps suggest a modification. The sum (£500) is the same (assuming 100000 words) which is important to me but £200 of it go to the royalties which is not so good for me as £500 for *serial only* even if I had to wait a year for my royalty.

As to Jim's expansion—well, I am sorry. Mr Blackwood must now forgive me and we won't let it happen again. But the story *is* good for all that.

¹ See letter to Blackwood, 14 February 1899, footnote, above.

[Meldrum to William Blackwood]

37, PATERNOSTER ROW | LONDON E. C. May 23 1900

MY DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Since you wrote me I have been in a correspondence with Conrad, which I now forward to you.

In answer to the letter of the 19th. I wrote pointing out the advantages, as I conceived them, to Conrad himself arising out of the new plan of publishing *Jim* as a volume in itself. I was sure that he had in his head material for a short story, or short stories, more suitable in length for the *Youth* and *H. of D.* volume, and equally suitable from an artistic point of view. With this, according to his letter of the 22nd., he now agrees.

As to the financial conditions there, of course, arose the difficulty I foresaw in this change of arrangement. We have now *two* volumes, and the terms for two volumes had already been arranged. In answer to that part of the letter of the 19th. I wrote saying that if, as I supposed, he wished me to lay his views before you, I wanted to understand them and the state of matters exactly before doing so; and I made some calculations, which were not quite right. This explains some parts of his letter of the 22nd. Regarding the reasonableness of his proposal

I said nothing, of course; only I pointed out, in indorsing what <you> he said about your fair right to return to the old terms, that you had especially a right to do so on this ground—viz—that *Jim* suited you as a short story, but possibly did not suit you so well as a long story, and that it became a long story without your having any say in that matter; and that, therefore, you might reasonably object to paying the larger serial rate for *Jim*. I said that I didn't state that as being your position, but simply that is one you might very naturally hold. His letter of the 22nd. shows that he gathers (as was intended) that such was your feeling about the length of *Jim*. On the other hand he sets me right about the larger serial rates for *Jim*. Now the correspondence will be quite clear.

The realization of the whole "deal" (so to speak) is put off for a year; but otherwise some such proposal as Conrad makes seems in our favour. Where I was wrong in my first estimate of it was in counting the serial rights of *Jim* at £5 per 1000. As Conrad points out, the proposal does not include that: it estimates serial rights at about £3 per 1000 only, for £200 is to go towards royalties.

I have merely acknowledged the letter of the 22nd, saying that I now understand the proposal, and will forward it to you.

Yours v truly

DAVID S. MELDRUM

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 2 June 1900*]

. . . Then let me just remind you of what I mentioned to-day—that £100 to Conrad at once would evidently be a benefit to him. . . .

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George Street | Edin June 4th 1900

DEAR MR. CONRAD,

I have pleasure in falling in with your new proposals for "Lord Jim", and my Assistant has been preparing a formal

Agreement embodying them to send you for signature. It is not quite ready, but meanwhile I enclose you cheque for One Hundred Pounds to account of the £ 300. payable to you under the new arrangement on delivery of the completion of the M. S.

The details of the sums already paid & still to be paid I shall make clear when I send you the balance, and in a few days I shall write you again submitting the formal Agreement for your approval and signature.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) WM. BLACKWOOD.

Joseph Conrad Esq^{re}

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 4 June 1900.

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

I enclose here with many thanks a formal receipt for £ 100 received on acc^t of *Lord Jim*.

Poor Stephen Crane died this morning.¹ I am too upset by the news to touch to-day upon one or two matters I wished to communicate with you about. One is as to a MS (not mine)² which I shall send off to M^r Meldrum on Thursday for a preliminary examination. But that will keep.

Believe me always very faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

¹ At Badenweiler. Aubry, I, 295.

² John Galsworthy (1867-1933), *A Man of Devon*, Edinburgh & London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1901.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | Thursday
[7 June 1900]

DEAR MR MELDRUM

I venture to send my friend's MS; Last post I had your good note and the typed matter. I hope you will enjoy your holiday

I've wired you of M^r B's remittance reaching me two days ago. Thanks for everything you have done for me.

The news of Stephens death has been a shock for I did not expect it so soon—at any rate.

Our kindest regard to Mrs Meldrum and yourself | Always yours

JPH CONRAD.

[In Meldrum's hand] Ans.

Date: Stephen Crane's death on Monday, 4 June 1900

[William Blackwood and Sons to Conrad]

26th June 1900

DEAR SIR.

Some time ago you were in correspondence with Mr. Meldrum with reference to the new proposal Mr Blackwood put to you for the separate publication of "Lord Jim." Mr Meldrum forwarded you[r] correspondence to us, and to keep matters perfectly clear between us we now beg to hand you the formal agreements for the publication of "Lord Jim", and for the volume of stories which, in your letter of the 19th of May to Mr Meldrum you proposed you should be made up to take the place of the volume which you originally designed under the title of "Three Tales of Sea and Land."

The terms of the agreements we have no doubt you will find quite in order with you[r] letter of above date already referred to.

With a view to securing the rights as far as possible in every direction, we have been in correspondence with our Canadian friends to secure for you in that country a separate copyright, and we have from Messrs W. J. Gage & Co, Ltd. of Toronto a proposal to publish "Lord Jim" in Canada and to pay you a royalty of 15% with an advance on account of that royalty of £30. This we may say is a very usual arrangement, and one we have carried out before with our authors. At the same time we must tell you that we also have an offer from Messrs G. N. Morang & Co, Ltd. also of Toronto, offering a royalty of 15%, but Messrs Morang have not stated any sum in advance of royalty.

Before accepting either of these proposals we shall be glad to know what Messrs Copp, Clark & Co, to whom we have also referred your work, offer for the rights to publish in Canada. In the mean time you can consider the two offers now before you, and advise us as to which of them you would wish us to accept, in the event of the Copp, Clark Coy not making a better offer or declining the book altogether.

We are, Yours faithfully,

WM BLACKWOOD & SONS

Joseph Conrad, Esq.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 29 June 1900

DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD.

I return agreements duly signed. I would have much to say to you but the last words of Jim are waiting to be written and shall be before midnight if so God wills . . .

Re Canadian proposals: I should say—"Gage" unless Messrs: Copp Clark & C^o are much better—as I know M^r Fairholm Gage's agent here and hear that he is very (?) anxious to secure the book for them.

However I am perfectly Content to leave all matters in your friendly hands.

Believe me always faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood & Sons*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 9 July 1900.

DEAR SIRs

Pray have the enclosed copy typed as fast as can be done; as the book is finished (I intend to bring the last pages on Thursday), and I shall want urgently the whole of the end for revision.

Be kind enough to let me know *where* is the last inst^t of my or[i]g[ina]l MS? And allow me to point out that you've sent the last inst^t of typed copy to Edngh instead of forwarding it to me. The typed copy unless corrected by me is not fit to go to the printers.

I am dear Sirs

faithfully yours

JPH CONRAD

Messrs: *Wm Blackwood & Sons*

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. [14 July 1900]

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

The last word of Lord Jim is written but before I retire to rest I must <as it were> with the same impulse, the same dip of the pen as it were say a word to you.

Whatever satisfaction I have now or shall have out of the book I owe very much to you—not only in the way of material help but in the conditions which you have created for me to work in by your friendly and unwearied indulgence.

I feel I owe you also an apology—many apologies for this long work about which the only thing I am sure of is the good faith I brought to its writing. I can't say much more. I would like to express something that would not be mere banality. But I cant. I've been now for 23 hours at work and feel unable to collect my thoughts.

We should like to leave for Bruges on Wednesday next. The type of the last part of MS will be sent to me here. I must live with the end for a bit. There are many places which a bit [of] judicious cutting would improve and so on. As there is enough copy set up to go on with I suppose I may take a little time. But it will be only a matter of few days at most. In a few hours I start for London with the last pages. I am too

tired to feel either glad or sorry just now. But it is a relief of some sort.

Believe me dear Mr Blackwood | very faithfully yours
JPH. CONRAD.

[*In another hand*] 13th or 14 July /00

Date: Meldrum's letter, immediately below, confirms the date of this one, as does also Conrad's of 18 July. Conrad finished *Lord Jim* two days earlier than has been previously thought. See Aubry, I, 295, footnote.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 14 July 1900*]

. . . Fortunately, I was in the office this morning when Conrad called with the conclusion of *Jim*, which went off to the type-writer *instantly*. He was, of course, in great spirits at being finished, and goes to Bruges on Wednesday, I think. . . .

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 17 July 1900*]

. . . It has just occurred to me that I mentioned the receipt of the last of *Jim*, but did not think of Conrad's considering that as a sign that a cheque would be acceptable. But by his agreement I understand he is to be paid on receipt of end of MS, and I believe that his visit to Bruges (now put off to Thursday, he tells me) is contingent to his receiving the cheque. I am going out after finishing this to wire you to this effect. . . .

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George Street | 18th July 1900

MY DEAR CONRAD,

I was very pleased to receive your letter telling me of the completion of "Lord Jim" and also from Meldrum that you had run up to town and left him the manuscript copy for the typewriter. I am looking forward with interest to receiving it from him before long and reading the final part.

Your very kind letter of thanks for the help I may have

afforded you in the writing of this book has gratified me much and I am only carrying out what has been the desire of all those who have gone before me in our connection with our authors.

It must have been a very hard and trying day to sit for 23 hours at work to complete it but I feel sure that it would be a great relief to you to have it off your mind and you will start for your holiday at Bruges with much greater pleasure. I am sure you must require a rest from continuous writing now and I hope you will give yourself a complete holiday before embarking on fresh work.

In anticipation of the arrangement we made for the payment in advance I have now the pleasure of enclosing you cheque for £100 leaving a balance of £115 still to be paid you on account when the completion of the story reaches me. I shall then have paid you on account of "Lord Jim", £300 for the serial rights and £200 in advance of the royalties on the book publication, in all £500.

etc

(Signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 18th July 1900

MY DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD.

I hope you'll find this less incoherent than the letter penned after sunrise on the fourteenth. Thanks very much for the wire which I found on my return home yesterday. At once I posted the corrected proofs of Ch: 28 to 30 (revise) and 31 to 35 (first proof) rather badly cut about—which is not altogether my fault as the type of that part had been sent off straight to Scotland without passing through my hands.

From end of 30 to end of 35 will make (unless I am mistaken) another instalment, and the next (Chap 36 en seq.) will conclude the story in the October issue.

It seems to me that *Lord Jim* as title for the book is meagre—perhaps misleading? Could not a sub-title be invented? I

am hammering the sorry remnant of my brain without being able to get sound or sense out of it. Perhaps even thus *Lord Jim: A romance* in one line would be better. I feel it's a poor suggestion.

Another matter, if it is not too late already, has occurred to me. Would it not be better seeing the form of the novel (personal narrative from a third party as it were) to dispense with the word *Chapter* throughout the book, leaving only the Roman numerals. After all, these divisions (some of them very short) are not Chapters in the usual sense each carrying the action a step further or embodying a complete episode<s>. I meant them only as pauses—rests for the reader's attention while he is following the development of *one* situation, only *one* really from beginning to end. I fear however that it may be now too late to make the alteration.

Mr Meldrum has told me that a story by my friend Galsworthy ('John Sinjohn') is in your hands; my friendship has of course nothing to do with my opinion of the work; I didn't think it unworthy (on literary grounds) of being submitted to you.

Believe me, dear Mr Blackwood, always yours faithfully

JPH CONRAD.

[*In pencil*] Will you advise me about this suggestion for title. There are still 30 pp in type besides the M. S. in your Type writer's hands. I hardly think that we shall be able to close in October with what is to come from you. W. B.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE. | 19th July 1900

DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD.

I am in receipt of your very kind letter enclosing a cheque for £100 on acct of *Lord Jim*.

I think that you shall have the typed copy (corrected) by the end of this month. I am sending my address in Bruges to M^r Meldrum and if there is no delay in typing there shall be no delay in correcting.

I am exceedingly unwilling to cut about a proof. I prefer correcting the type where I can interline, erase and slash out without the feeling of causing extra work to be done.

Indeed my dear Sir I couldn't adequately express my appreciation of your unvarying and much tried kindness.

The end of Lord Jim in accordance with a meditated resolve is presented in a bare almost bald relation of matters of fact. The situation—the problem if you will—of that sensitive nature has been already commented upon, illustrated and contrasted. It is my opinion that in the working out of the catastrophe psychologic disquisition should have no place. The reader ought to know enough by that time. I enlarge a little upon the new character which is introduced (that of Brown the desperate adventurer) so as to preserve the sense of verisimilitude and for the sake of final contrast; but all the rest is nothing but a relation of events—<a> strictly, a narrative.

Pardon this egotism. My head is full of this thing yet.

Believe me, dear M^r Blackwood, very faithfully yours

JOSEPH CONRAD.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 21 July 1900*]

. . . Regarding Conrad's story, I consulted Mr Mackenzie,¹ who thinks 'Lord Jim', simply, a very taking title, in which I agree with him. Misleading it may be; but, commercially speaking, it is good, I think. . . .

¹ W. Mackenzie was a traveler for the firm. (Mr. G. D. Blackwood.)

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

Hotel de la Plage | Knocke-sur-Mer | Belgium | 23^d July 1900

DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD

The enclosed letter written on the eve of our departure from the Pent got itself carried off here in my writing case.

I don't know what you must have thought of me?

Besides your letter that to M^r Meldrum (giving my address) has been also found here by my horrified wife. No wonder I haven't got you the type of *L. J.* It is a stupid accident. First thing tomorrow morning I shall wire my address to 37 Paternoster Row and I've no doubt that by the end of this month the corrected copy shall reach your hands.

Pray accept my apologies for this delay in acknowledging your good letter and the cheque.

Always very faithfully yours

JOSEPH CONRAD.

PS We've found Bruges too hot so came on to this little seaside place¹

¹ The Conrads and Hueffers spent a month at Knocke-sur-Mer, roughly, 20 July—20 August. Hueffer says that the "most terrible" of all their struggles over *Seraphina* took place here. (Ford Madox Ford, *Joseph Conrad*, 117-118.) Conrad, on the other hand, wrote Galsworthy on 11 August, "poor H did not get much collaboration out of me this time." Aubry, I, 296.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

Pent Farm. | 1 Sep^t 1900.

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

Thanks for your note; I was very sorry I couldn't see you, but I came up rather unexpectedly and there was no time to warn you.

I've dispatched to Edinburgh the last Maga proofs of *Jim*; a good bit cut about but undoubtedly bettered. I am glad *that* at least is off my mind as I am blessed with enough worries to prevent me from going to sleep.

The day I came up I ran across [*sic*] McArthur whom I did not know before. He seemed to be animated by most friendly sentiments towards your servant. I was at lunch with Edward Garnett when he turned up—and this brings me to one of the objects of this letter.

E. Garnett thinks of publishing (in due time) a vol: of criticism. It will be something fresh and intelligent too—and it is about time intelligence had its say in those matters. What

he would like to do would be to publish very soon what is intended <to> for a sort of introduction to such a volume, as a paper in some magazine.¹ This would be a general view, a sort of philosophy of criticism as he conceives it illustrated by examples (from Lyoff Tolstoi to Joseph Conrad I believe) giving his idea of the relation between literature and life in their modern conditions. A large order for 6000 words. Still the man is quite capable of it; and I am sure there will be no platitudes in it whatever amount of sound truth there may be. Do you think he would have any chance of being given room in *Maga*?

For myself I don't see why not. Whatever his political and social opinions may be (and he is not one to obtrude them in questions of art) his attitude towards literature is, one may say, aristocratic. This obviously is not the same thing as conservative—still. And, at any rate, it would be a fresh utterance. If the idea commended itself to you and you were to drop him a friendly line he would call on you and explain exactly what it is he wishes to say—and thus you could judge better whether he would be acceptable to M^r Blackwood.

I haven't heard from M^r Blackwood lately. Do you have any idea whether the "Man of Devon" is accepted or rejected? Jack Galsworthy has been down to see me since my return and I rather think the poor fellow is worrying <about> a bit about it. He finished another thing called *The Cosmopolitan* quite as good as the *Man of Devon* but a little shorter. There's stuff in the chap.

Now as to myself. I must make a fresh start without further delay. I think of writing something that would be suitable for the vol. of Tales. I would like to know whether M^r Blackwood would wish to serialize that too (First command² would be the title probably). The fact is I could I think place it elsewhere (especially after *L. Jim* comes out) at an advantageous rate and I think I shall be ready in about six weeks. Of course were M^r Blackwood to take it I wouldn't expect immediate publication, but I would expect (can't help myself) immediate payment.

¹ "The Difficulties of Contemporary Criticism" appeared in *The Monthly Review*, 5 (1901), 92 ff. Poole's *Index*.

² See letter to Blackwood, 14 February 1899, footnote, above.

I would also—supposing the story completed the vol:—beg that the book should not be published in the Spring. My collaboration story shall appear in March³ and the two would clash.

If Jim has any selling success (which I doubt) I would have a clear road to run after the end of the *Rescue*. Otherwise I can see I shall have a difficult existence before me. Sometimes I feel utterly crushed at the prospect; and yet I can not but feel that I've been exceptionally fortunate in the appreciation my work has met with, and in the friendliness and generosity of my publishers. Surely if I go under I shan't have the divine consolation of railing bitterly at the unkindness of mankind. This, as you perceive, is a serious disadvantage.

Anyhow I shall try to swim as long as I am able. My wife joins me in kind regards to Mrs Meldrum and yourself. Believe me yours always

JPH. CONRAD.

PS Will you forgive me if I put off wiping out my indebtedness to you till I get my Canadian rights advance?

PPS Does <you think> Tauchnitz⁴ take up the books published by the Messrs. Blackwood. I should like to place my Jim in Germany with Tauchnitz. Unwin always managed that for me (so he said at least), or is it Tauchnitz himself who approaches the author or the publishers?

[In William Blackwood's hand regarding Galsworthy's *A Man of Devon*]
Returned Sep 10 with polite note & asking to see anything else

³ *The Inheritors*. Wise, 15.

⁴ See letter of 17 October, footnote, below.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | 3 Oct. 1900
MY DEAR M^r MELDRUM.

Very many thanks for the cuttings. I had a letter from E'gh with details as to the start of the book in the way of

subscription.¹ It isn't exactly like Marie Corelli's but let us hope it will improve.

Could you tell me whether my advance from Canada (£30) is to come through Mr Blackwood? I want it pretty badly since I've not yet finished the *Typhoon*² which is to prolong my wretched existence. That infernal story does not seem to come off somehow. Meantime the Canadian dollars would be welcome. I can't let the pony starve. I can't explain to him that it is because of my high principles in story writing. And could you perhaps give me an idea how long one has to wait.

The *M. G.*'s notice is good. The *D. Chr.* notice is good too—should say best for selling. I do want to write something that would be *really* good.

I ought to have written to you before but on my return I was distracted with Hueffer.³ When he went away I was half dead and crawled into bed for two days. | Always yours

JS CONRAD.

[In Meldrum's hand] Ans. 5/10/00.

¹ This letter has been lost. *Lord Jim* in book form appeared on 15 October. Gordan, 400.

² This reference to "Typhoon" suggests that Conrad began it in late August after his return from Knocke-sur-Mer or in early September. It was finished 11 January 1901. Quinn, 174.

³ Probably over *Seraphina*.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | Thursday.

[11 October 1900]

MY DEAR Mr MELDRUM.

I've been beastly seedy again. The fact is I ought to have a winter out of England. So the doc. says.

Still I've been working. Would you send me back the specimen of the story I've left with you. I want to look at it and perhaps expunge a par. or two.

Upon the whole I hardly think it would be worthy of Maga.

But the end is not yet (though it is not far) and it's impossible to say till the thing is done.

Our kindest regards | Ever yours

JPH. CONRAD.

[*In Meldrum's hand*] Ans.

Date: The "specimen" is *Typhoon*, the return of which is acknowledged Wednesday, 17 October.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | 17 Oct 1900.

MY DEAR M^r MELDRUM.

Pardon the delay in answering. I've been in bed.

I would like to come,¹ if able, which I hope.

Would you let me know the day?

May I ask for 4 more copies of *Jim* which I wish to send abroad. One is for my German translator² and the other for relatives.

When coming must I bring sable garments? I know Mrs Meldrum would let me off the conventional disguise but it is better to be sure. | My wife's kind regards. | Always yours

JPH CONRAD

P.S. The MS *Typhoon* to hand. Thanks.

¹ To a dinner at the Garrick Club, 24 October. See next letter.

² *Lord Jim*, trans. Hedwig Lachmann and Ernst W. Freissler, was published by S. Fischer, Berlin, in 1927. B. Tauchnitz, Leipzig, brought out an edition this same year. See Kenneth A. Lohf, Eugene P. Sheehy, *Joseph Conrad at Mid-Century: Editions and Studies, 1895-1955*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957, 13.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 18 October 1900*]

. . . Mr George has just come up to tell me that Smith and Son have just sent in for, among other things, 13 *Lord Jim*. I am doing all I can to bring some personal influence to bear in the direction of appreciative articles on Conrad.

[Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 22 October 1900]

. . . Mr Michie is going to dine with me at the Garrick on Wednesday night. I have asked Dunn, Conrad, and Stephen Gwynn¹ to meet him (with Mr George, of course) and hope they will come. I would have asked Buchan, but remembered Conrad's violent antipathy to his work,² and asked Gwynn instead. I think we should have a pleasant little party. . . .

¹ Alexander Mickie, G. Dunn. (Mr. G. D. Blackwood.)

² See letter of 8 November 1899, above.

[Extracts: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 26 October 1900]

. . . We had a very pleasant little party the other night, and I think Mr Mickie enjoyed himself. He was very glad to meet Conrad, and Conrad equally to meet him; and Dunn and Gwynn had been wanting to meet both,—so that they were all very jolly. . . .

. . . I am glad to see excellent notices of *Lord Jim* in *D. Chronicle* and in *Manchester Guardian*: the latter especially is quite unusually enthusiastic. I have sent both notices to Conrad, who lives in need of these encouragements. . . .

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | 7th

Nov. 1900.

MY DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Many thanks for the *Cinque Ports*¹ which came today as a most agreeable surprise.

In the matter of outward characteristics the book has substance, appearance an air of sober finish which to me is very pleasing. As to the inside—Hyde's art is undeniable and is done justice to, in a remarkable successful manner. Of the

¹ Ford Madox Hueffer, *The Cinque Ports*. Illustrated by William Hyde. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1900.

letter-press I had always a good opinion. Hueffer's talent has been from the first sympathetic to me. Throughout, his feeling is true and its expression genuine with ease and moderation. He does not stand on his head for the purpose of getting a new and striking view of his subject. Such a method of procedure may be in favour nowadays but I prefer the old way, with the feet on the ground. Neither does he tear his hair with enthusiasm and paint his Ports red; but there is—it seems to me—a good deal of force in his quiet phrasing. His facts I believe to be right and his theories have some authority to back them and at any rate are no worse—I believe—than many theories of all sorts that born yesterday jostle us today, and shall fall to pieces to-morrow.

Upon the whole the criticism in the excellent last N° of *Maga* is fair and in the main judicious.

I had the pleasure of dining with M^r George Blackwood a few days ago and was very happy to hear that your health was good. I trust we shall have a merciful winter. Even now, after dire experience, it seems to me impossible that a little cold or a little more or less wet should affect one's efficiency and even happiness. I can't forget the days when 'climate' did not exist for me as long as there was enough air to breathe and not too much wind to keep my feet.

Believe me, dear M^r Blackwood, very faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

[*William Blackwood and Sons to Conrad*]

22nd, Nov. 1900.

DEAR SIR,

We are today in receipt of the note from Messrs W. J. Gage & Co. of Toronto enclosing their bill of exchange for thirty pounds (£ 30.) being the sum they agreed to pay in advance and on account of royalties for the Canadian rights of "Lord Jim". As the bill was made payable to us we have placed it

to our account and herewith hand you our cheque on Coutts for the amount.

Kindly acknowledge the receipt of the cheque and oblige.

Yours faithfully,

WM BLACKWOOD & SONS

Joseph Conrad, Esq.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | Tuesday
morning [27 November 1900]

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

Many thanks for the *Spectator*,¹ I received yesterday morning. Be assured that all the little and all the great proofs of your friendly feeling are appreciated by your recipient—if he does often neglect to acknowledge them as promptly and as adequately as is proper and seemly and as, indeed, is his desire to do.

The review is good is it not. The *Speaker*² too reviewed me the same week—Whig and Tory. That was also a good review. Upon the whole the 'Press' is good. The provincial papers seem to catch on to Jim. They sent me some cuttings from Ed'gh. The Bradford Obs^{er}³ was most appreciative.

Last Sat: I had a cheque from my Canadian pub^{er}⁴ through Mr B'wood. It has come none too soon, for I must tell you that taking advantage of feeling pretty fit just now I've made an endeavour to get my life insured. I trust the matter will go through. I've undergone yesterday the Med^l exam^{on}. Nothing's radically wrong; but there is my wretched gout in the way.

I work more or less ineffectually. The typhoon⁴ is still blowing. I find it extremely difficult to express the simplest

¹ "Novels of the Week," *The Spectator*, 85 (1900), 753.

² "Fiction," *The Speaker*, 24 November 1900, 215. Signed: L. R. F. O.

³ The file of this newspaper in the British Museum was destroyed during the Second World War.

⁴ See letter of 3 October 1900, above.

idea clearly. It is a sort of temporary fog on the brain; and it has kept me back.

Henry James wrote me an absolutely enthusiastic letter about the book.⁵ That was a great pleasure.

My wife sends her kindest regards. We trust you are all well. Post waits | Ever yours

JPH CONRAD.

PS Do the B'woods think of the Tauchnitz business for *L. J.*? And is there any chance?

Date: The appearance of *The Speaker* on Saturday, 24 November 1900.

⁵ This letter has been lost. Aubry, I, 299, footnote.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 28 November 1900*]

. . . Some very good orders to-day, I think. We must be wearing down *Lord Jim* now—our stock here is only 43; and the press notices are most excellent. . . .

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 3 December 1900*]

. . . You ask me for my views about printing 500 or 1000 of *Lord Jim*,¹ and I have been asking Mr George's assistance in calculating the relative costs, of which I know nothing, and without knowing which my views would be of no use. He estimates that to print 1000 would cost about £15 more than to print 500. In that case, seeing that we cannot afford to let *Lord Jim* go out of print, and that Conrad is a man whose coming into his own may take very long but is bound to result one day, would it not be wiser to print 1000? But on such a subject, I can only speculate. . . .

¹ The first impression of *Lord Jim*, October 1900, ran to 2100 copies at six shillings a copy; the second impression, in December, ran to 1050. See Appendix A.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

Pent Farm. | Stanford N^r Hythe. | Kent. | 6 Dec. 1900.

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

Pardon these scraps of paper. I can't find anything else, and the matter is pressing. I wish to consult you.

Briefly the affair is this: I've been accepted by the Standard Life Ins^{ce} C^o for the sum of £1000. I've got my bankers (Wm. Watson & C^o 7. Waterloo Place) to pay the premium for the first quarter so that so far the matter has been carried through; but in order to get my affairs into some short [*sic*] of shape I must raise £150 which would enable me to discharge my liabilities (to you amongst others). I can get this from the Ins. C^o at 5%. And in fact this transaction must be carried out to make my Ins^{ce} arrangement permanent.

To carry it out (as suggested by my bankers) I must find two *good* sureties which would guarantee the premium and interest on loan. I thought Heinemann would undertake to be one and I wish to ask you whether Mr Blackwood would be the other? Of course I would write direct to M^r B'wood if you thought such a step possible and effective.

Were Heinemann unwilling Jack Galsworthy (he has plenty of money and a great affection for me) would join the Firm of B'wood as second surety, or he <may> would join the *two* firms as *third* surety thus making the individual responsibility of each, less.

I am not likely to go utterly wrong on the payments and very soon each of these firms shall have two books from me. I am in a tight corner and this would give me a chance to breathe for a while. The liability would not be very imminent for with a guarantee at the back my bankers would always make up any deficiency on the premium should this be temporarily required. They are in fact doing it *now* without any such security. I shall go on working as long as I live and my debt would end their liability leaving always £850 clear to my creditors. The repayment of the sum borrowed would remove also their liability

and such repayment (by instalments) shall be one of my endeavours. And I could not pledge my policy any further without the knowledge and consent of my guarantors. This is the matter. Pardon me for this endless bothering you with my affairs. I await your opinion.

Ever yours

JPH CONRAD.

The premium for £1000 is £35-1-8 yearly. (First quarter paid) The interest on loan would be £7-10- : Together £42-11-8 which would be the sum guaranteed.

The Typhoon is all but finished¹ and pleases me now so that I am sorry it isn't for *Maga*.

P.P.S. As there is now some *estate* (at least for the next 3 months) I send you an IOU in case I should kick the bucket before the matter treated in this letter comes to pass.

¹ See letter of 3 October 1900, above.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 13 December 1900*]

. . . Before coming here . . . I had a call from Conrad, who brought also Mr Galsworthy to see me. He only remained a moment, but he seems a fine young fellow, and very fond evidently of Conrad. So am I. Mr George will have told you a proposal Conrad thought of making to you.¹ To-day he spoke of it—it is modified slightly—and asked if I thought he might write you. I told him certainly. Whether or not you could see your way to do what he asks, you would, I said I was sure, be quite sympathetic in the matter, and be pleased, rather than the reverse, at his placing his confidence in you regarding his affairs. Therefore he will be writing you. As a matter of fact, there is no risk in what he suggests, if the policy is properly drawn.

¹ See the next letter.

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | 14 Dec 1900.

DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD.

I trust you will read what follows in a forgiving spirit—and as the matter is pressing I proceed to state it without further preamble.

I have, lately, insured my life for £1000 with the Standard Life Ins^{ce} C^o. and now I desire to raise two hundred pounds on the same. This loan is, I scarcely need to tell you, not for the purpose of indulging any sort of whim, and not even for the purpose of spending the winter abroad (which my doctor has recommended)—but to clear up generally my financial situation and to discharge a certain obligation which weighs on me the more, because it cannot be legally enforced. I may mention incidentally that my bankers Messrs: Wm. Watson & C^o of 7 Waterloo Place SW. think this step advisable since I can get the money from the Ins^{ce} Coy at 5% for a term of five years.

For this the Company requires two sureties to join me in a bond guaranteeing the principal, interest and premium. It is not easy for me to find two sureties which would be considered *good* by the Coy. Discussing this matter with M^r Wm. Watson yesterday he said that *if* M^r Blackwood would <become> consent to become one of the sureties he, himself, would be the other.

I venture therefore to put this request before you. You would be rendering me a very great service. No doubt the thing could have been managed in some other way but really my dear M^r Blackwood I am so worried with the thoughts of my work and the pain of my gouty foot that I have not the courage or the energy to go 'flying around' as a Yank would say. And there is also the fact that I find it easier to put myself under obligation to you than to any other man—a fact not particularly fortunate for you perhaps—but illustrative of my feelings.

The only thing I am anxious about is that you should not take it ill.

I took my gouty foot to London yesterday to see Watson;

and I also called on Meldrum whom I acquainted with my intention of writing to you on that matter.

Believe me, dear M^r Blackwood, always very faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

PS. The annual premium is £35-8- and the interest on £200 would be £10 yearly. The loan is for five years to be paid off by instalments. The policy is made out to my estate.

PPS. Before I could send off this letter I received a distressing communication¹ which in my at present helpless state (I am in bed) forces me to ask you whether you would not—whatever your decision on the main matter—lend me now £50 to be repaid as soon as my loan from the Insurance C^o is negotiated. Negotiated in one way or another it must be and it would be anticipating one of the purposes for which it is intended. It is not a fresh liability. Only *time* in this case is of the greatest importance. You may imagine how pressing the case must be to prod me into such an appeal

JC.

¹ See Introductory Essay, xxii-xxiii, xxvii-xxix.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | 18 Dec 1900

MY DEAR M^r MELDRUM.

I have mentioned to Jack Galsworthy that Messrs: Blackwoods were disposed to publish the vol: containing the *Man of Devon*, *Knight* and *Swithin*.

He is immensely pleased at the idea. Says he: "*If Blackwoods take to me I want no better luck.*" I earnestly hope, now I started the matter, the thing will come to pass.

The *Knight* (or the *Cosmopolitan*) is to appear in Febr. Mch. Ap: numbers of the *Argosy*. The *M of D* is now held by Lippincotts Mag: but what their answer may be is not known yet. The third story I do not think he intends to try to serialize.

Jack is gone abroad but shall be back for the New Year and

remain in London a few days. If he could hear anything by that time it would make him glad, and me too.

I've written to M^r B'wood about <the> my affair. I haven't had an answer yet. However I don't worry for if this fails the Firm of H.[einemann] will lend me the amount without any difficulty.

I shall let you know as soon as I hear. Believe me always yours | CONRAD.

Have you seen the notice in *Literature*?¹ I am glad somebody arose to slate me properly. That means that I *exist* anyhow.

¹ This reviewer of *Lord Jim* holds that Conrad "cannot write what is commonly understood as a novel." See *Literature*, 7 (1900), 489.

[William Blackwood to Conrad]

45 George Street | Edinburgh | Dec. 18. 1900.

DEAR MR CONRAD,

Your letter of the 14th only reached me yesterday and I was very sorry to hear that you had been suffering so greatly both physically and mentally and had been so much worried by thoughts of your work. I thank you for your confidence in myself to help in relieving you of your present financial difficulties, and to oblige you by becoming one of the two sureties for raising the sum of £200 on your life policy with the Standard Insurance Co.

What your Banker Mr Watson proposes seems to be the best step you can take and I shall be glad to become one of the two sureties required by the Standard Life Insurance Co on a bond guaranteeing the principal interest and premium along with Mr Watson.

You further ask me in a P. S. to oblige you with the loan of £50 to be repaid me as soon as your loan with the Insurance Co is negotiated, and I now enclose you cheque for that sum.

Trusting this finds your gouty foot less painful, and that

the loan on the bond with the Insurance Co will be speedily carried out,

Believe me, Yours very sincerely,
(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

Joseph Conrad Esq.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 19 December 1900*]

. . . I'm glad that you were able to see your way to oblige Conrad, who, I feel sure, is an honourable man. I wish I could believe that he would ever be "popular" in the popular sense, but he is too good for that. On the other hand, it would seem that over "Lord Jim" he is coming into his own quicker than so "unfashionable" and clever an author his [has] any right to expect in these days. . . .

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |
19th Dec. 1900

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Many thanks for your letter and the enclosure. You should have heard before from me but last night the postman did not turn up and the weather was so infamous that I hadn't the heart to send the sort of errand boy we have, a mile across the field to the post office.

I can't tell how sensible I am to all you say and are doing for me.

I am communicating your answer to Watson.

'Literature' went for me heavily—otherwise I am the spoiled child of the critics.

Jack Galsworthy came down to see me. He is very pleased with the kind letter you wrote him—though the *Knight* is declined.¹ He would like to be published by you in book form;

¹ Blackwood first rejected *A Man of Devon* (see his note, letter of 1 September 1900, above), then published it in 1901.

and I have written to Mr. Meldrum on the subject. I trust you will see your way to take up Galsworthy. He is genuine and has the making of a stylist in him, with a well-balanced temperament and a poetical vision. There's not a grain of humbug in the man.

Believe me, dear Mr Blackwood your most obliged and faithful

JPH CONRAD

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | 30 Dec 1900

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

My best wishes for the New Year and for the New Century.

You have made the last year of the Old Century very memorable to me, by your kindness. I am alluding to the production of Lord Jim—an Old Book by this time.

I can't think of that work without thinking of you. As it went on I appreciated more and more your helpful words your helpful silence and your helpful acts; and this feeling shall never grow old, or cold or faint.

Very faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | 3 Jan 1901.

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

I am advised by Watson & Co that they are sending you my Loan application Form (on which they figure as second sureties) for the needful filling up. I wish to explain that instead of One policy for a £1000 I have taken two for 500 each and on one of these the loan is raised.

They acquaint me also that they have made the loan <of> £250 instead of two hundred as originally contemplated. They

seem to think it advisable and they are certainly good judges of my financial situation.

I could only write to them that I have asked you to be joint surety with them for £200 only. Obviously it is to my interest to borrow enough. The bungling as to the amount was probably my fault. Now the matter rests with you.

Believe me, dear Sir, always very faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

[*William Blackwood and Sons to Conrad*]

[Edinburgh] 20th March 1901.

DEAR SIR,

We have made up the Statement of Sales of Lord Jim from date of publication in Oct: to the 31st Dec^r last. So far the sales have not yet covered the advance made on account of royalties but as the sale continues fairly steady although not large we are hopeful of seeing the balance cleared off and afterwards some payment being due to you at the rendering of each Account. The sale would certainly be revived by the issue of the volume containing "Youth" and we look forward with anticipation to the completion of that volume when you are able to do so.

We have also received from Mess^{rs} Gage & Company the Account for the sales of the Canadian Edition which we enclose with our own.

We are, Dear Sir | Yours faithfully
W^m BLACKWOOD & SONS

Joseph Conrad Esq
Pent Farm
Stanford
Kent.

[William Blackwood to Conrad]

45 George St. | Edinburgh, | May 18. 1901

DEAR M^r CONRAD

I have received the enclosed from Mr F. C. Constable,¹ the clever but at times somewhat erratic author of one or two novels which I have published. He is a great admirer of your work as you will see from his letter, and you must not mind what he says or take his remarks too much to heart. He is genuinely interested in your writings, and if you see your way to corresponding with him, I am sure you would get to appreciate the man, and it would be a great pleasure to him. He is an ex-Indian Civil Servant, and lives at a delightful old Elizabethan house near Bristol, which is still in its original state.

I have not heard anything of you for a very long time. I hope you are well, and doing good work. Am I to have anything from you soon for Maga?

Yours very truly

(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

Joseph Conrad Esq^{re}

¹ Frank Challice Constable (1846-1937), *Marrables Magnificent Idea*, 1901.

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |
24 May 1901.

MY DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD.

Many thanks for your letter. The enclosure was most interesting. It reveals an original personality and, to me, attractive. It is at the same time a most flattering recognition of my qualities and shortcomings. I shall write to M^r Constable in a day or two.

I own, with shame, that too long I've not written to you; I have been writing hard however, trying to get over the work which lies between me and Maga. It loomed as big as a mountain, but now it is more than half scaled at last. Another 20000

words separate me from the summit. And then <a> I shall begin another climb forthwith, on behalf of the vol: of *Youth*. The simile of hill climbing is not used to hint at the loftiness of my work, but simply as conveying a notion of its arduousness.

Do you think that another 20000 added to *Youth* and *H of D* would make a satisfactory volume. I ask the question in view of treating the subject I reserve for that vol:—and am I right in thinking that it shall be favoured by Maga's hospitality? It may in that way extinguish my debt to you (of £50) which I have incurred with every appearance of false pretences. I have been bitterly ashamed ever since. But there is in me yet some of the unreasonable Jack ashore spirit, and not a little of that truly Polish hopefulness which nothing either nationally or individually has ever justified. In extenuation I may only say that my embarrassments [*sic*], worrying and humiliating, did not arise from any personal extravagance. I've taken up certain obligations which are heavier than I expected. It is a poor excuse enough but it will serve like a straw to a drowning man; and that hopefulness of which I've spoken shall always prevent me from sinking as long as I can move hand or foot.

I have been in Winchelsea (returned yesterday) for a fortnight; finishing a story for Heinemann,¹ drinking bottled Carlsbad water and working with Ford Hueffer on our romance of Seraphina. That will be ready in a few days. It is something. How much of a thing it is hard to say. It has a certain originality—of *exposition*, I may say. Would you care to look at it? I would in that case direct Pinker to submit it to you. Pinker is doing some business for me and shall be entrusted with Seraphina; but for reasons which I trust you will understand without explanation, I have barred our relations from his influence. As to my *own* work especially—and as to our joint productions at least by implication.

I put all these questions because I intend to run up especially to see M^r Meldrum—probably in some 10 days' time—and if

¹ "Falk." MS inscribed, "Winchelsea, May, 1901." Quinn, 176. The third tale in *Typhoon and Other Stories*, which Heinemann brought out 22 April 1903. Aubry, I, 311.

you were to let him know your wishes we could talk matters over.

Believe me my dear M^r Blackwood, always faithfully yours
JPH. CONRAD

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George Street, | Edinburgh, | June 1. 1901.

DEAR M^r CONRAD

I was glad to have your letter of the 24th, and to hear your news.

I should like to see "Seraphina", and if you will ask Mr Pinker to send me the MS, I shall be happy to give it my personal attention, and take its publication into consideration.

Glad you have been so full of work, and with regard to your inquiry about "Youth" and "The Heart of Darkness", I find that these two stories together make 182 pages of the volume. They are already stereotyped so the rest will have to be set uniform.

I do not think the volume could be made less than 300 pages, and as there are about 300 words in the page, that leaves forty thousand words to be supplied. If you think the story you thought of writing should run to twenty thousand words or so, just keep it at that, and write another one, and send them both to me for Maga. This will more than extinguish your debt, and be satisfactory to both of us.

Yours sincerely,
(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

Joseph Conrad Esq^{re}

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. 3 June 1901.

DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD.

Thanks for your encouraging letter.

In reference to the *Youth* volume I have two subjects which will do—I hope. I am cheered to think I shall again see day-

light through the Maga window. Pinker has got a couple of my stories—good too—but no one seems anxious to print them.¹ They make <about> more than half of the vol destined for Heinemann. I regret they are not for you.

I would like to see M^r Constable—and I've not yet written to him. But I must—soon. As to getting as far as Bristol I can't think of it just yet. I run on with leaden feet and do not seem to advance an inch. I see no one read nothing but Maga which is a solace a treat, an event!

I like Linesman immensely.² The last one of Zack was admirably done.³ Lawson's sketches are beyond praise—the more so that in such a subject it takes a first rate man not to break through the thin ice of sentimentalism.⁴ My best wishes go with Doom Castle for the sake of the author and the publisher.⁵ The value of the work is undeniable without any wishing

Believe me yours faithfully. JPH CONRAD.

¹ "Falk," "Amy Foster." The date of this letter would indicate that "Amy Foster" was completed before June 1901—not during that month, as stated in Aubry, I, 168, 300.

² "Linesman" (Captain M. H. Grant), "Charity," *Blackwood's*, 169 (1901), 741-763.

³ "Zack" (Gwendoline Keats), "Mary Amelia Spot," *ibid.*, 616-628.

⁴ Henry Lawson (1867-1922), "Past Carin," *ibid.*, 684-699.

⁵ Neil Munro, *Doom Castle: A Romance*, *ibid.*, 764-778.

[Extract: Meldrum to George Blackwood, 26 June 1901]

. . . *The Rescue* is off, I told M^cClure.¹ You must remember, however, that it is a very different story since that submitted in '98.² Altogether re:written and re:constructed . . .

¹ To Hueffer: "Then to give the story [*Seraphina*] a fair chance I have given up the idea of presenting the *Rescue* to B'wood. This was McClure's wish and intention." Aubry, I, 312. This letter should be dated "June 1901" instead of "Tuesday. [1903]."

² Error for 1897. See letter of 28 October 1897, above.

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

[In another hand] Story here Parts I, II, & IV.

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | 4 July 1901

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

I have asked Pinker to send you parts I II and IV of our joint novel *Seraphina*. Part III I keep by me yet. It is as a matter of fact completely written. We had done with it. The whole secret of its being held back lies in this that since the prospect of its appearing in *Maga* I have given rein to my unholy passion for revising, reconsidering, re-writting [*sic*]. I don't mean to say that there is anything, in that part, unsuitable for the pages of *Maga*. It is a part of adventure (and a good many of them) my concern being not the matter—which is all right—but the expression which on my final reading (all by myself) seems to me not—what shall I say?—consciencious [*sic*] enough. Pray don't smile! Some passages struck me as lacking vigour—others as wrong in tone—too much *written* in fact; and therefore I want to write them once more, after my own fashion.

This is what I am engaged in doing now and shall take a fortnight and perhaps a day or two more over it.

Meantime I enclose here an epitome of the part stating the events with which it deals. From parts I. II & IV you will be able to judge of the literary qualities and defects of our tale. This tale—which we call a romance—has been grubbed out of the British Museum by Hueffer. All the details of the political feeling in Jamaica (about 1821) are authentic. There was really a perfectly innocent young Englishman who was tried for piracy and escaped the gallows by the merest hair's-breadth. There did exist a nest of pirates about that time on the coast of Cuba.¹ They were a sorry lot—I admit. O'Brien is our own

¹ Hueffer discovered the story of Aaron Smith in "Cuban Pirates: A True Narrative," *All The Year Round*, New Series, III (1870), 172-178. (See F. M. Ford, *Joseph Conrad*, 13, 27-28.) The article was adapted from *The Atrocities of the Pirates; being a Faithful Narrative of the Unparalleled Sufferings endured by the Author with an Account of the Excesses and Barbarities of those Inhuman Freebooters*. By Aaron Smith (who was himself afterwards tried at the Old Bailey as a Pirate, and acquitted). 1824. Reprinted by the Golden Cockerel Press, 1929.

invention, and he is possible enough—I mean historically possible. Good many Irishmen took refuge in Spain, made careers, and founded families. For the rest you'll see we do not go in for analysis of character seeking rather to present a succession of picturesque scenes and personalities. We try to produce a variation from the usual type of romance our point of view being that the feeling of the romantic in life lies principally in the glamour memory throws over the past and arises from <the> contact with a different race and a different temperament; so that the Spanish girl seems romantic to Kemp while that ordinary good young man seems romantic and even heroic not only to Seraphina but to Sanchez and Don Riego too.

Pardon this long letter; and pray believe me always very faithfully yours JPH. CONRAD.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |

3^d Aug 1901.

MY DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Some time ago Edward Garnett telling me he was about to terminate his connection with M^r Heinemann¹ spoke of his intention of doing some work in the sphere of criticism. A a [*sic*] fundamental study of critical work as a whole, under the title of: "The Contemporary Critic" was to <open> begin a series of appreciations including the work of modern poets and novelists with a philosopher or two thrown in.

I have been always anxious to see him do something off his own bat instead of judging in obscurity the more or less deplorable play of countless Others. His unaffected desire to appeal to that part of the public which the Editors of "Maga" had known how to group around their magazine—the *only* magazine—my great belief in his talent and abilities, our general agreement upon the subject in hand—have induced me to promise that I would forward his introductory study to you, with an

¹ Garnett became reader for Gerald Duckworth. Garnett, 184.

earnest request to give it your consideration, basing myself on such rights as my status of contributor gives me of access to my chief—but more still on my experience of your open mind and of your kindness.

Therefore I forward here P I of the Contr^y Critic. Part II (of about the same number of pages) shall be ready very soon. The matter of it is interesting and true. The expression studiously moderate. I need not say that M^r Lang is by no means attacked there. On the contrary his utterances are used as the text of the argument because his position in the first rank is recognized as indisputable. Believe me, dear M^r Blackwood most faithfully yrs JPH. CONRAD.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 5 August 1901*]

I am sending to 45, registered, with another instalment of *Charlotte* for the printer, *Seraphina* MS. Conrad's account of the story (in the letter which accompanies the MS.) is very just and adequate. Part I is short—some 15,000 words, and very good; Part ii, some 30,000; and Part iv, the trial, some 20,000. If Part iii, still to come is, as Conrad says, equal in length to ii and iv, then it will be 50,000 words, or nearly half the book.

From this portion one can tell that the literary quality is high. That was to be expected. The fault of the thing, stated in a word, is that it is Hueffer's story and Conrad's <story> telling; and that the dramatic intensity, while there, appears a little forced. So I think. But it is a capital story, told with all Conrad's wonderfully gleaming and suggestive method. If Part iii sustains the interest—it is the adventure section—*Seraphina* would do very well for *Maga*, I think, and would be a change. Of course, one of Conrad's own stories would be better still—there is nothing here like the present portion of "The Rescue"—but, then, we might wait years for a long story by him. I will be glad and anxious to read Part iii, and then report on the whole novel. Meanwhile I return the MS. . . .

[William Blackwood to Conrad]

45 George Street, | Edinburgh. | 15^t Aug. 1901.

MY DEAR CONRAD,

After a very careful reading and consideration of the three Parts of "Seraphina", which reached me through Mr Pinker I am very reluctantly compelled to disappoint you and Mr Hueffer by coming to an unfavorable decision regarding them. I think it better to write you at once, therefore, rather than await the arrival of Part III, which I fear is hardly likely to alter my view as far as Maga is concerned, and by returning the three Parts of the MS. now you will be able to offer the sooner to offer [*sic*] them elsewhere, or have them at hand to offer as soon as you have completed the third Part.

It may seem rather odd to decide so definitely without having seen Part III, the nature of which indicates plainly a scope for your imaginative powers, but I have to look to the work as a whole, and I am very doubtful if Part III would change my feeling about it. I am accordingly returning now the three Parts to Mr Pinker with a note.

I have always intended to write and ask you if you would not occasionally send me an article for Maga on a literary or artistic subject which may interest you. I would be glad to consider any such paper if you thought of anything that appealed to you. I do not wish to suggest any fresh labour for you but only a light paper now and then which would be a recreation to you in the midst of your more serious work.

I had a glorious holiday and came back from S^t Andrews, quite refreshed and strengthened. The sea breezes & fine dry air of the golf links were just what I required with the daily sunshine we were favoured with. I hope you have also benefited from the warm weather and are now "going strong & well" as Admiral Kennedy expressed himself to me the other day when here. Have you ever met him? He is a jolly sailor & good fellow & full of good stories.

Yours very sincerely.

(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

Joseph Conrad, Esq.

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT, 26 Aug. 1901.

DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD.

I am very delighted to hear you are well and "going strong" as Admiral Kennedy says. I've never had the pleasure of meeting him; but I've read and admired his book. Now a book of that sort *is* the man—the man disclosed absolutely; and the contact of such a genuine personality is like an invigorating bath for one's mind jaded by infinite effort after literary expression, wearied by all the unrealities of a writing life, discouraged by a sunless, starless sort of mental solitude, having lost its reckoning in a grey sea of words, words, words; an unruly choppy sea running crosswise in all the endless shifts of thought. Oh! for a cutter and the Fatshan Creek, or for that wonderful beat-up from Mozambique Channel to Zanzibar!¹ A wrestle with wind and weather has a moral value like the primitive acts of faith on which may be built a doctrine of salvation and a rule of life. At any rate men engaged in such contests have been my spiritual fathers too long for me to change my convictions—if I have pulled off my sea-boots, hung the sou'wester on a peg and made a tasteful trophy of my pet marline spikes. I re-read Admiral Kennedy's book with gratitude and have a great affection for the man; for, with due regard to all the differences, even a cat may nourish a tender sentiment for a king.

I hear from Garnett that the 2^d part of the critical essay shall be ready early next week. I've dropped him a note recommending the greatest possible diligence. I own that I am very anxious he should find a way to your convictions; for this man too is very genuine, capable under encouragement of achieving even brilliance and at any rate solidity of not an obscure sort. I think I forgot to say in my last letter that in the matter of

¹ In his *Hurrah for the Life of a Sailor: Fifty Years in the Navy* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1901), Admiral Sir William Robert Kennedy (1838-1916) gives an account of the Battle of Fatshan Creek, Canton River Delta, China, 1 June 1857, and of his being shipwrecked on a coral reef in the Mozambique Channel, December, 1860. See 84-93, 127-131.

writing over his signature he is indifferent. If it comes to publication it shall be as you prefer.

Thanks for your kind inquiries. My health is better than my industry which seems to depend on something mysterious and even more capricious than the weather. Still something is written every day.

Believe me dear Mr Blackwood always most faithfully yours
JPH. CONRAD.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 6 September 1901*]

. . .Is this the only letter you have had from Conrad? And did he not say anything about *Seraphina*? . . .¹

¹ He is unaware of Blackwood's having turned it down.

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George Street, | Edinburgh. | Sep. 17. 1901.

DEAR MR CONRAD.

I am sorry, but I must disappoint you and Mr Garnett about the "Contemporary Critic" papers. I have little sympathy with articles of this kind, which to my mind are somewhat futile as nobody reads them.

When are you going to send me something of your own again? I should be glad if you could aim at completing the volume of "Youth and Other Stories" in time for publication early in the Spring of 1902. This is important.

Yours sincerely,
(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

Joseph Conrad Esq^{re}

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE. | KENT | 7th Nov 1901

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

My conduct is certainly outrageous but I am getting such a hardened sinner that even a plausible apology does not run

easily from my pen. It seems to me that I have already used all the forms of them, and I daren't or care not to produce the old excuses—so truthful after all, and so threadbare.

Of course I was sorry (without in the least questioning your judgment) that you did not see your way to accept Garnett's article;¹ and I will admit the rejection of *Seraphina* had shaken the confidence with which I looked upon that work. So, as one can not turn back till the furrow is ploughed to the end, I took it in hand: and whether I've finally spoiled a big lot of paper or made some sort of tale I can't say. In any case I suppose the seasons shall follow each other in their secular course, and I would not have mentioned the matter at all, only that I wish you to know I've not been exactly lying on the floor and groaning. Such was the practice of a certain shipmaster I've known in my very young days and I remember well my astonishment at such an irrelevant conduct. Truth to say looking back now I am not so astonished. We live and learn; only I haven't got a man at £8:10 p month, to write my confounded stuff for me and save the ship.

I hope by the 15th of Jan^r next to place in your hands about 30000 words for the *Youth Vol*—perhaps a little more. Characteristic matter suitable for Binding together with what is already written—and essentially autobiographical. That is, more in the note of *Youth* than in that of the *H of D*.

Of the three stories which are the sum of my marketable work for the year ending last July one is accepted by the *P. M. M.*² and another by the *Ill: Lond: News*.³ The third, 'Falk' (the name of the principal man) no one seems anxious to gather in. Probably on account of his size, because his behaviour, if cannibalistic, is extremely nice throughout—or at any rate perfectly straightforward. I think so well of the story that if it handn't [*sic*] been for very shame after the avalanche of *Jim*

¹ "I am bitterly disappointed at B'wood refusing your paper. The action seems to me unqualifiable; neither does he qualify it getting off the track with vague civilities. One can only say "damn!" Garnett, 182.

² "To-morrow," *The Pall Mall Magazine*, August 1902. Wise, 26.

³ "Amy Foster," the *Illustrated London News*, December 14, 21, 28, 1901. *Idem*.

I would have sent it North to try its luck with you. But it was impossible, and moreover it must go for M^r Heinemann's volume.

The last *Linesman*⁴ was of a really superior excellence. I've ordered the book.⁵ As to *Charlotte* the genui[ne]ness of its conception the honesty of its feeling make that work as welcome as a breath of fresh air to a breast oppressed by all the fumes and cheap perfumes of fiction that is thrown on the altar of publicity in the hopes of propitiating the god of big sales. It is refreshing indeed. And of course I won't say the display, but the *outlay* of skill, very quiet, very sure skill, is of no mean order. Altogether a delightful piece of work.

Street's critical article is (apart from undeniable literary quality) first rate and gets home most convincingly.⁶

I shall be writing soon to M^r Meldrum and as I get a handful of pages ready shall be sending them to him for transmission to Edinburgh.

Believe me, dear M^r Blackwood always very faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

⁴ "Linesman" (M. H. Grant), "Night," *Blackwood's*, 170 (1901), 579-590.

⁵ Captain M. H. Grant, *Words of an Eyewitness: The Struggle in Natal*, Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1901.

⁶ George S. Street (1867-1936), "Three Novels," *Blackwood's*, 170 (1901), 271-276.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | 7 Jan 1902

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM

I know I behave most abominably to you, giving no sign of life till I got to ask for something. But do not suspect me of ingratitude or forgetfulness. The fact is I seem unable to write a letter most of the time. Many a time have I sat down with you in my mind—and then laid the paper aside thinking that later on something more satisfactory could be written. But things do not improve.

Seraphina seems to hang about me like a curse.¹ There is always something wrong turning up about that story. After M^r B'wood's refusal of the same I first dropped it in disgust; Then took it up again and have been working very hard at it. It is now a satisfactory piece of work but not quite rearranged and adjusted all through to the changes in action and in the reading of characters which I have introduced. Hueffer was to do all that—instead of which he goes and tries to swallow a chicken bone, gets nearly choked, awfully shaken up, unable to work and so on. I could have wept. Still there was no remedy so I buckled-to again and am still at it driving hard. I had just <a> one days respite—Xmas—that's all—but the book is a new book and really not bad at all this time.

A few days 'll see all the loose ends gathered up the tangle unravelled and the last knot tied. I long for the day! The past has been a disastrous year for me. I have <idled> wasted—not idled—it away, tinkering here, tinkering there—a little on *Rescue*, more on that fatal *Seraphina* with only three stories (50000w) finished and *two* others begun lying in a drawer with no profit or pleasure to anybody.

<In> On the other hand my health has been remarkably even and very tolerable—while when writing *Lord Jim* in ten months or less I had been feeling always on the brink of the grave. Explain it who may. And perhaps true literature (when you “get it”) is something like a disease which one feels in one's bones, sinews and joints.

However I feel that if I can only tide over all the beastly bothers (that very naturally beset a man who has not worked enough to keep body and soul together) I shall get my feet on the firm ground or my head above water—Whatever is the proper metaphor for this kind of situation. The delay in placing the three stories I had achieved dispirited me for a time in a most ridiculous and lamentable manner—for after all I *do* know fairly well what I am doing and the unwillingness of editors to publish the stuff does not affect its value.

¹ Finished by 8 March 1902. See letter of that date, below.

I wish Mr B'wood could be induced to—so to speak—*hire* me permanently take all my stuff as it comes—lock it up in a desk if he likes—publish when he likes, never publish! Anything! That would be an ideal state of affairs for me.

However that's a sort of dream that's not likely to come true.

Upon the whole Pinker I believe has tried and upon the whole has done his best for me. To appear in P.[all] M.[all] M.[agazine] and the Ill: Lond: News² is advantageous no doubt—but I only care for *Maga*, my first and only Love!

I am, as soon as ever I can, going to work for *Maga* at last. My idea is to do some autobiographical matter about Ships, skippers, and an adventure or two. How will that do? Pray tell me. *Youth* style upon the whole <but> only not with the note of Youth in it but <but> of the *wonderfulness* of things, events, people,—when looked back upon.³ Do I make the idea clear? Of course it shall be 'fiction' in the same sense that *Youth* is fiction. Some critics, at the time, called it a short story! Q did, for instance.⁴ And, by the bye his *fiction* in *Maga* is *x* well I won't say.⁵ On the other hand the *C of C* is in many respects admirably done; with a sincerity of feeling and a skill! I am simply *fond* of that piece of work. Hueffer maintains, <that it> and has always maintained that it is *you*. I wrote to Mr B'wood some time ago of the story putting the question. I've had no answer to that letter. If it is you pray accept my congratulations in which there is nothing affected; they are as sincere as the story—though not of the same value.

Do you think Mr B'wood is in any way offended or annoyed. He need not be. One does what one can; and I've not wasted

² See the letter immediately above.

³ *The Mirror of the Sea*.

⁴ "But this one short story 'Youth' contains all the insight of the first novel and more. It unites the fascination of the sea and the spirit of youth together in a story which—so far as the framework goes—might be one of the ordinary stories told by ordinary writers for ordinary boys at Christmas. But the framework goes for little; for the story contains an idea and it has the magic of the sea in it besides. . . ." "A Sea Story," *The Speaker*, 17 September 1898, 343. Signed: A.T.Q.C.

⁵ Arthur T. Quiller-Couch (1863-1944), *The Westcotes*, Blackwood's, October 1901-January 1902.

time or substance in riotous living tho' things are in a rather bad way with me just now. But that is nothing new.

And in this connection do you think M^r B'wood would advance me £50 after I send in say 5000 words. The whole contribution either in one or two *stories* (of the kind I mentioned) I intend to be of about 30000 words. Could you manage to convey him a hint to that effect. I don't ask how much he will pay me per 1000 but £4 would not be unreasonable. It is (in confidence) what Pinker advances me on my stuff on delivery. But he had a better price for my Ill. Lond News story. PMM paid me a little more. Why I so pointedly ask you the question <it> is because the affirmative would set my mind a little at ease—and I expect to have the 5000 words done shortly. Of course I would be sending on more to you as fast as possible.

I am inutterably weary of all this.

Thanks for your kindness, for your good wishes. I intended to write to you for the NY's day but being in Winchelsea, with Hueffer very unwell, and the wretched work on my hands I absolutely had no knowledge of the day incredible as it may appear. And after missing *the* day I waited with my wishes and congratulations till I had got away from the place. I arrived home only a couple of hours ago with the piles of MS of our Romance and in a worry that almost drives me out of my mind.

Believe me my dear M^r Meldrum always yours most faithfully,

JPH. CONRAD.

PS I have also by me a paper <on> comparing the spirit of Elizabethan times with ours as expressed in the respective literatures. Nothing heavy. I would polish it up if you think there is any chance of acceptance for Maga. Unsigned of course.

[In Meldrum's hand apropos of Quiller-Couch's *The Westcotes*] I agree with Conrad it is——I tried to read the story but couldn't. DSM

[Conrad to George Blackwood]

Pent Farm. | Stanford N^r Hythe | Kent. | 28th Jany 1902

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD

I am ready now,¹ thank God! to take in hand the completion of the *Youth* volume of stories. I say: thank God, because it is an unspeakable relief to write for *Maga* instead of for "the market"—confound *it* and all its snippetty works. To open one of their Magazines is like opening your tailor's book of patterns for trouserings—only the book of patterns would be the more genuine production of the two.

But first of all I wish to ask you whether you could see your way to take up for *serial pub^{on}* a story <of> which I have on hand. What lies at the bottom of this cool request is this: I want M^r Heinemann's volume of short stories (now ready)² *out of the way* (together with the Coronation) for the sake of the *Youth* book. Otherwise I would not seek to add to the obligations under which I am to the House already.

You would really be rendering me a great service. The story is good; its size alone (24000 w) is against the speedy placing of it, and placed serially it must be because I had an advance on it from Pinker. Its title is *Falk: A Reminiscence*³ and it would go into two numbers, each *instlmt* being a little shorter than the one *inst^{mt}* of *Karain: A Memory* which, as you may remember was published in *Maga* under similar conditions. In its way it is superior to *Karain*. On the other hand it is not a thing intimately felt, like *Youth* or *H of D*. not to be used in the same volume. I plan another sort of stuff for its completion. Besides the tale is specifically intended for Mr H's book; designed to go with the other of that group. Would you permit Pinker to send you the MS, and make him an offer for it?

I've commenced working for the *Youth* vol: and by the 15th of Febry shall be sending in copy—either to Meldrum as before, or to Ed'gh, according as you shall direct me. I have 30 000

¹ *Romance* was not finished before 8 March 1902. See letter of that date, below.

² *Typhoon and Other Stories*, published 22 April 1903. Aubry, I, 311.

³ Never serialized. Wise, 26.

words laid up in my cranium; remains only the writing of them; no trifle I'll admit. It shall be maritime stuff in the manner of *Youth* and *H of D*. Very personal.

The advance on royalties on book-form I've had already some time ago. As to the serial appearance of this portion of the vol: I would suggest £4 per thousand (30 000 words). Also I would ask you to make me an advance on that of a fifty, about the middle of next month, providing there is ten thousand words at least in the copy sent in by that time.

If we had negotiated through an agent I would not have had to bother you with this last request; only, this time I preferred to approach you personally—as indeed I would at any time. Since the subject of liter: Ag^t has cropped up, should he in the future ever approach you with my work pray don't believe that he has any "squeezing" mission. As <a man> Pinker is attending to my affairs, it is only <that> fair that, after I had cleared up my arrears, he should be allowed to attend to them all. I told him that in the future you are to be given the first refusal of all my work—for indeed I had much rather work for *Maga* and the House than for the "market": were the "market" stuffed with solid gold throughout.

May I beg your answer on all these points, and also on the point whether 30 000 words are enough to make up the volume. I reckon *Youth* at 15000. *H of D* at 32 000. I ask the question because I understand that these two stories are already in plates.

Pray remember me to your uncle. I was sorry to hear he had been so unlucky in the matter of the weather; but at this time Sicily ought to be all right. With kind regards, very faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD

[George Blackwood to Conrad]

45 George Street | 3 Feb 02

DEAR M^r CONRAD,

I have delayed answering your letter until I had looked into the various matters you had touched on, but I wrote to Mr Pinker for the MS of "Falk", and I have received it from him

this morning. I shall hope to let you know about it very soon.

With regard to the other points you mention you are right in saying that £100 was paid to account of the "Youth and other Stories" volume. I find also that my Uncle sent you a cheque for £50 on December 18th 1900 by request as a temporary loan when you were arranging some Insurance business. There is however I think some misunderstanding as to the arrangements for the story or stories to complete the Youth volume for I find on looking up your correspondence at the time the new arrangement was made for "Lord Jim" that you engaged "to complete the volume of stories at the old rate of £2.10/- per thousand if Mr Blackwood should wish to use these serially". Further in a note you repeat that the volume is "to be finished on the old conditions at a future time by one or two tales to complete the number of words agreed upon to make a 6/-volume. A (the volume) is paid for unless Mr Blackwood desires the balance of it to appear serially in *Maga*, when he shall pay £2 10/-per thousand of copy"¹ It was on this definite agreement drawn up by yourself that we expected the volume to be completed, and this arrangement was probably overlooked in the long interval of time that has elapsed since then when you now propose that the terms are to be increased to £4 per thousand words for serial publication of the story to complete the volume "Youth &c".

I am glad there is a near prospect of this volume being completed, and that you think you will be able to send a large batch of manuscript soon. I think an additional 30,000 words to what is in type would make a fair 6/- book, but if you have another and strong story there is no reason why we should not include it and make the volume a full one. I would not however hold over the book publication for another season for this purpose.

As you ask will you kindly send me the MS direct. It will save time.

&c | Believe me | yrs sincerely
(signed) G.W.B.

Joseph Conrad

¹ See letter of 19 May 1900, above.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

[Stanford] Tuesday. [4 February 1902]

DEAR MR MELDRUM.

I send you the letter from G. B. and the precis of my answer which goes north by the same post with this.

As you will see he mentions the £50. This may give an opening for approaching the subject of a further advance, the two to be consolidated and secured on copyright of *Lord Jim* and *Youth* as you have suggested.¹ As I am going to get so much less than I expected for my serial rights of the forthcoming 80000 words² that matter is more important than ever. Could you then make the preliminary soundings as you have in your kindness proposed to do.

The question is: Can it be done at all—first. And if it can be done can I ask for a 100 or more—or if not for a 100 then for how much?

I do not like to part with the copyright altogether but I must offer them something. Could I surrender it for a certain number of years for instance? Or up to a certain amount of copies sold?

I want of course to get as much as possible, and give them something not altogether illusory in exchange. If they believe in a future not so much for Myself as *for my work* the thing can be done and I don't mind a sacrifice; since I cannot wait and the firm of B'wood & Sons can afford to bide the time.

Many thanks for your really unwearied kindness

Always faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

Answered. The agreement (made at the time *Lord Jim* was published) for the completion of *Youth* vol: must of course stand at the rate of £2.10 per 1000. serially. Say £75. for 30000 words. Whatever more may be judged necessary for the *vol* would be forthcoming at same rate; but hope that 30000 would do.

(It would make about 85000 in all which is a fair size for a vol).

¹ See letters of 31 May, 3 June 1902, below, and Introductory Essay, xxv-xxvi.

² The *Youth* volume.

In reference to the £50. lent by Mr B'wood said: that am not in a position *at present* to work it off or otherwise discharge my indebtedness.

Explained: Am not responsible for <what> the terms Pinker may ask for *Falk* as he has a lien on the story.

Date: George Blackwood's letter of 3 February 1902—a Monday.

[*Conrad to George Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |
5th Febr 1902

DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD.

I regret that you should have to remind me of the agreement as to the rate of serial payment for the balance of the <book> serial form of *Youth* and other stories. Of course the thing is perfectly clear since it was mentioned when the arrangements for a separate publication of *Lord Jim* were being made—that novel itself being paid for (as a serial) at a higher rate.¹ And in this connection (since the lapse of time, as you suggest, is responsible for my error) let me assure you that nothing but hard necessity had kept me from completing the volume. Every one of the 80000 words I've written² (solus—because there's another 80000 or so in collaboration)³ since the end of *Lord Jim*, has been written with the regret that they were not destined for *Maga*. My ambition had never been to see myself drawn, quartered and illustrated in a Magazine run for the Million by a Millionaire.

I had not forgotten the advance of £50 made me by your uncle at the time you mention. I said nothing about it for the reason that I am not in a position *at present* to propose working it off or otherwise discharging that particular debt. I am still in a very thick wood of arrears but I begin to see daylight.

Thanks for your promptitude in looking at *Falk*. In this connection I must observe that I would not be responsible for the terms Pinker may ask. He has a lien on the story.

¹ £3 a thousand words. See letter of 19 May 1900, above.

² *Typhoon and Other Stories*.

³ *Romance*.

Whatever shall be necessary for the completion of the volume shall be forthcoming at the agreed rate—say £75 for 30 000 words; and if you would when 10000 w. are <ready> to hand send me £30 it would be very convenient.

I was in London on Monday and had the pleasure of making your brother's acquaintance.⁴ We lunched with Meldrum. Though I had my arm in a sling and most horrid twinges of gout in my wrist I enjoyed myself greatly. I fear however your brother carried away the impression of a loquacious lunatic, from that smoking-room.

Should you accept *Falk* I would beg for the MS to look over. I haven't seen the thing for six months and have no copy at home. It would probably save much cutting up of proof; and this is my reason for asking. But pray do not imagine that I take acceptance for granted in the least.

Believe me very faithfully yours
JPH. CONRAD

⁴ James Hugh Blackwood (1878-1951).

[*Extract: Meldrum to George Blackwood, 6 February 1902*]

. . . Mr James had told me of your correspondence with Conrad; who, when he was up on Monday, told me that he had written you. I am sorry he saw us before we had heard from you on the subject, because if there is any misunderstanding about the magazine rates for the new material it could easily have been cleared up, I think.

It is so long since I went down to Essex, commissioned by your Uncle to discuss terms for his *Youth* book, that I could not have trusted my memory for the exact figures, £100 on account of volume, and £2.10/- (1000) for *Maga*; as revealed by the correspondence; but the lines of the negotiation I remember perfectly. Conrad is under obligation to us to give the completion of volume matter for the Magazine at the old rate (2.10/- it appears), and I am sure he will see that when you have put it before him.

As a matter of fact, "Lord Jim" matter, coming before the completion of volume, *might* have been paid for at that old rate—I mean to say that Mr. Blackwood would have been entitled to drive a hard bargain in the circumstances. But Mr. Blackwood, of course, had no wish to drive a hard bargain; he has always expressed his wish to do what he could for Conrad, and has done it; and he paid a considerably higher rate for *Lord Jim*, as Conrad has now before told me, expressing his sense of appreciation thereof. All the more, then, it seems to me, we are entitled to ask the completion of the volume matter, at the original rates, for the Magazine. And this, I feel sure, Conrad will acknowledge at once. . . .

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | 8 Mch 1902
MY DEAR M^r MELDRUM.

I am so sorry I worried you. Calling on Friday at pater-noster Row I heard you were seedy.

Many thanks. I'll wait till Mr B'wood is in London.¹

It's wonderful how well sustained is the excellence of Charlotte. I've just read the last instalment; for, finishing our Romance, I had no time to read anything for the last fortnight. The ease of the narrative is fascinating by itself. I may well believe it cost you much labour—unless you are luckier than most of us who write.

I trust I'll soon hear of your complete recovery. Many thanks. | Very faithfully yours,

JPH. CONRAD

¹ To confer about a loan against copyrights. See letter of [4 February 1902], above.

[William Blackwood and Sons to Conrad]

[Edinburgh] 14th April 1902

DEAR SIR

We enclose you the Statement of Sales of "Lord Jim" for the year 1901. Although the number of copies sold is not large

we are glad to see that the book has continued to go off and we are in hopes that the new volu of Stories "Youth etc" may have a stimulating effect on "Lord Jim" and give it a fresh start in the autumn.

With regard to the issue of "Youth" we do not think it would be advisable to send [?] it now before early autumn. The Coronation excitement will most likely interfere with the sale of most publications during summer and as the volume cannot be published well before these Festivities begin it would be better to hold it for early autumn. We shall be glad to know when we may expect the final instalment of the new story to complete the "Youth" volume.

We are | Yours faithfully
W^m BLACKWOOD & SONS

Joseph Conrad Esq.

[*Conrad to George Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |
20th May. 1902

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

You may well say: at last—but if you knew how hard on me too are my delays you would feel relieved out of pure human compassion.

This is 14 000 words.¹ There are more written and you need not apprehend anything in the nature of Lord Jim's development. That sort of thing does not happen twice.

There will be about 30000 words. If you make one instalment of this the other two may be shorter—say 8 000 each. However this first batch may be cut anywhere. I am read for my quality and cannot regard anything else. My quality is my truth. The rest may go.

I have now blocked out in MS about 6 000 words besides

¹ The first part of "The End of the Tether," begun, presumably, after the completion of *Romance* in March. See letter of 8 March 1902, above.

what you receive. Probably before I get the proofs of this I shall be ready to send you another batch.

Pray send me £30 pounds. I would not ask if I did not need the money urgently; and you cannot be more disgusted with me than I am with myself.

In haste. Kind regards | faithfully yours
JPH CONRAD.

[*George Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George Street, | Edinburgh, | 23rd May 1902

DEAR MR CONRAD,

I have received the manuscript you sent me a day or two ago, and it seems to me that this story should suit Maga, though as far as it goes at present one can hardly say one has got into the story yet. My present arrangements are such, however, that the story must begin in July or I shall not be able to accept it. I trust that this proposal will suit you, and that the rest of the MS will come forward immediately. If it does suit you and you let me know I shall be happy to send you £30 in advance and on account of the payment for the serial rights.

I am indeed sorry to hear that you so urgently want this advance.

Believe me,
&c (signed) GEORGE WM BLACKWOOD

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |
27th May 1902

DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD.

During your absence I've been in communication with M^r George Blackwood regarding the completion of the Youth volume. Six days ago I forwarded Part the First of *The End of the Tether* containing rather more than 14 000 words. Part the II^d now being finished off, shall be ready by the 20th

of next month. The whole will not fall short of the 30 000 words which were needed to make up the volume. From his last letter I am glad to learn he thinks the story suitable for *Maga*

In my correspondence with him (which through a blunder of mine had to touch upon my money-indebtedness to the 'House') I have said nothing as to the loan from the Insurance Office being paid off; this now is done and the Indenture with the cancelled signatures of my sureties is now in my possession.

My gratitude for your assistance at that time does not come to an end with the transaction; neither is it (as the epigrammatist defines it) "a lively sense of the favours to come": though I proceed now to ask you for the favour of an interview during your stay in London.¹ Half an hour of your time (on an early a day as you may find convenient) would set my mind at rest as to the proposal I wish to make. It is of great importance to me; and I think—as far as it concerns you—it is fairly "presentable"—or of course I would not entertain the notion of presenting it. I don't put it down on paper because—apart from the very real pleasure of seeing you—I would rather face the matter out than try to write about it plausibly.

Believe me, dear Mr Blackwood, always faithfully yours

JOSEPH CONRAD.

[*In Blackwood's hand*] and WB

¹ See Introductory Essay, xxvi.

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

30 Bryanstone Street, W. [London] | May 29th 1902.

DEAR MR CONRAD,

I had pleasure in receiving your letter brought along to me by my nephew James Blackwood and of reading about the arrangements you have been able to make in relieving me of the suretyship I had undertaken on your behalf, and for which I thank you. If it is convenient for you to come and have a

talk with me on the matter you wish to speak about Saturday morning from 10-30 to eleven o'clock would suit me very well. If not let me know when you can arrange to call. Yes I was glad to hear from my nephew George that your new story is promising well for the Magazine, in which case I should wish to start possible [*sic*] in July number so as to publish volume of stories in September or October at latest.

Believe me, dear Mr Conrad, | Always yours sincerely,

(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

Joseph Conrad Esq.

[*Extract: Meldrum to George Blackwood, 30 May 1902*]

. . . He [William Blackwood] has also a letter from Conrad proposing to call to see him, and he wishes to have a statement sent him of our financial "state" with Conrad, including the results of *Lord Jim*. . . .

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

[Stanford, 31 May 1902]

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

The affair looks shaky. Still M^r B said finally that he would consider and "consult M^r Meldrum, M^r Morton"—and so on. I send him a letter today and a *memo* of what I propose, of which the copy I enclose here for your judgment. He was very kind but told me plainly that I was a loss to the Firm. Thats hard enough to hear at any time. I do think also that he resented a bit my going to Pinker; but I think I've explained away that bad impression—and towards the end the *tone* of the conversation was changed in a subtle way.

If you think this agreement at all fair I know you will back me up. Mr B seems half-anxious to feel he will get a look in with my future work. I gave assurances—but pledge it I will not. If it comes to pledging my work a year ahead I can with a *guaranteed* policy get 300 somewhere else. And would

have to do it too. All this horrible and the time passes the story is hung up. Kindest regards | Always yours

CONRAD.

The cheque has not come yet. M^r B only told me he would send it at once. It's the most humiliating thing in the world.

Date: See that of the letter immediately below.

[31 May 1902]

Copy.

Pray believe that I am assuming nothing as to your action. But as you said most kindly that you "would consider" I set down here a memorandum of what I wished to propose.

The copyright in Eng & the Col^{les} and USA of *Jim* (on which £200 has been paid on ad^{vce} of royalties) and of *Youth* (on which £150 has been paid in ad^{ce} of roy^{es}) becomes your absolute property in consideration of a further pay^t of £50 and a loan of £300 bearing interest at 5%. No date shall be specified for the repayment of the principal. I shall assign to you a life policy for £400 (or if margin seems inadequate then £450) and Mr John Galsworthy shall *guarantee* the payments of half-yearly premiums necessary to keep the policy in force—say for ten years. *At my death you repay yourself the principal and such interest as may be due to date and hand the balance over to my wife.* I am at liberty to extinguish the debt by partial payments in the manner most convenient to me, paying interest on the residue till the final settlement. On the day the sale of these works should have reached 15000 copies at 6/- (or a larger number of cheaper copies equivalent to 15000 at 6/-) half the debt (150) shall be considered as extinguished interest reduced and the balance of ins[uran]ce money handed to my wife proportionately increased—unless I pay off the remaining half then and there when the policy reverts to me. But should my death occur before the Number of copies is reached Messrs: Blackwood repay themselves in full as stated in the underlined passage. Only if at any time between my death and the expiration of copyright that number of copies sold is reached Messrs.

Blackwood would pay my <wife or> heirs the sum of £100. In introducing this condition I waive any right the acceptance would give me of seeking information or inspecting the books of the Firm either by myself or my agents the books being absolutely and without reserve the property of Messrs: Blackwood and my confidence in them complete.

The weak point of the scheme is of course that it <gives you no surety> provides no guarantee for <pay> the regular pay^t of interest. I don't see how to meet this. But *without specifically* pledging my future work to you I would suggest that as M^r Pinker has definite instructions to submit my productions to you in the first instance any terms agreed upon the same may include a stipulation as to arrears of interest if any. Otherwise my works shall come before you in no way affected and without any lien on them in consequence of this arrangement: it being clearly understood that the privilege [*sic*] of priority in acquiring my work is a matter voluntary on my part quite distinct from the existence of this arrangement and in which I am solely moved by my great personal regard for the Head of the <Firm> House.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYPHE, | KENT. |

31 May 1902

DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD.

Directly on my return I sit down to thank you for your very kind and patient hearing. That the occasion was painful to me (it is always painful to be 'asking') makes your friendly attitude the more valuable: and to say this is the primary object of my letter. But there is something more.

I admit that after leaving you I remained for some time under the impression of my 'worthlessness'; but I beg to assure you that I've never fostered any illusions as to my value. You may believe me implicitly when I say that I never work in a self satisfied elation, which to my mind is no better than a state of

inebriety unworthy of a man who means to achieve something. That—labouring against an anxious tomorrow, under the stress of an uncertain future, I have been at times consoled, re-assured and uplifted by a finished page—I'll not deny. This however is not intoxication: it is the Grace of God that will not pass by even an unsuccessful novelist. For the rest I am conscious of having pursued with pain and labour a calm conception of a definite ideal in a perfect soberness of spirit.

That strong sense of sober endeavour and of calm conception has helped me to shake off the painful impression I had, notwithstanding your kindness, carried away from our interview. I don't—in the remotest degree—mean to imply that you wished to crush me. Nothing's further from my thought; but you are aware, I hope, that your words carry a considerable weight with me; and now I have no longer the bouyancy of youth to bear me up through the deep hours of depression. I have nothing but a faith—a little against the world—in my reasoned conviction.

I've rejected the idea of worthlessness and I'll tell you, dear Mr Blackwood, on what ground mainly. It is this:—that, given my talent (which appeals to such widely different personalities as W. H. [E.] Henley¹ and Bernard Shaw²—H. G. Wells³ and professor Trgö Hirn of the Finland University⁴—to Maurice Greiffenhagen⁵ a painter and to the skipper of a Persian Gulf steamer who wrote to the papers of my 'Typhoon'—to the Ed of PMM⁶ to a charming old lady in Winchester⁷) given my talent, the fundamental and permanent failure could be only the out-

¹ W. E. Henley (1849-1903) had published *The Nigger* in the *New Review*.

² Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) and Conrad were in general antipathetic. See Wells's *Experiment in Autobiography*, London: Gollancz, 1934, ii, 620, and Garnett, 185. This may have been some verbal compliment.

³ See H. G. Wells (1866-1946), "An Outcast of the Islands," *Saturday Review*, 81 (1896), 509-510.

⁴ Yrgö Hirn (b. 1870), Professor in the University of Helsingfors, wrote an introduction to the Swedish translation of some of the *Tales of Unrest*, Stockholm, 1903. The translation was by his wife, Karin Hirn. See also letter of 22 December 1902, footnote, below.

⁵ Maurice Greiffenhagen (1862-1931), R. A., illustrated "Typhoon" in the *Pall Mall Magazine*, January-March, 1902.

⁶ George Roland Halkett (1855-1918).

⁷ M. Harriet M. Capes, who had praised *Lord Jim*. Aubry, I, 303 (22 March 1902).

come of an inherent worthlessness of character. Now my character is formed: it has been tried by experience. I have looked upon <life> the worst life can do—and I am sure of myself, even against the demoralising effect of straitened circumstances.

I know exactly what I am doing. Mr George Blackwood's incidental remark in his last letter that the story is not fairly begun yet is in a measure correct but, on a large view, beside the point. For, the writing is as good as I can make it (first duty), and in the light of the final incident, the whole story in all its <detail> descriptive detail shall fall into its place—acquire its value and its significance. This is my method based on deliberate conviction. I've never departed from it. I call your own kind self to witness and I beg to instance *Karaïn*—Lord Jim (where the method is fully developed)—the last pages of *Heart of Darkness* where the interview of the man and the girl locks in—as it were—the whole 30000 words of narrative description into one suggestive view of a whole phase of life, and makes of that story something quite on another plane than an anecdote of a man who went mad in the Centre of Africa. And *Youth* itself (which I delight to know you like so well) exists only in virtue of my fidelity to the idea and the method. The favourable critics of that story, Q⁸ amongst others remarked with a sort of surprise “This after all is a story for boys yet——”

Exactly. Out of the material of a boys' story I've made *Youth* by the force of the idea expressed <with> in accordance with a strict conception of my method. And however unfavourably it may affect the business in hand I must confess that I shall not depart from my method. I am at need prepared to explain on what grounds I think it a true method. All my endeavours shall be directed to understand it better, to develop its great possibilities, to acquire greater skill in the handling—to mastery in short. You may wonder why I am telling you all this.

First because I am sure of your sympathy. I hope that this

⁸ See letter of 7 January 1902, footnote, above.

letter will find its place in that memoir which one or two of my young faithfuls have promised to offer to my 'manes'. It would be good for people to know that in the 20th century in the age of Besants,⁹ Authors' Clubs and Literary agents there existed a Publisher to whom <a> not an altogether contemptible author could write safely in that strain. Next because I want to make good my contention that I am not writing "in the air". It is not the haphazard business of a mere temperament. There is in it as much intelligent action guided by a deliberate view of the effect to be attained as in any <sub> business enterprise. Therefore I am emboldened to say that ultimate and irretrievable failure is *not* to be my lot. I know that it is not necessary to say to you but I may just as well point out that I <can> must not by any means be taken for a gifted loafer intent on living upon credulous publishers. Pardon this remark—but in a time when Sherlock Holmes looms so big I may be excused <for> my little bit of self-assertion.

I am long in my development. What of that? Is not Thackeray's penny worth of mediocre fact drowned in an ocean of twaddle? And yet he lives. And Sir Walter, himself, was not the writer of concise anecdotes I fancy. And G. Elliot [*sic*]—is she as swift as the present public (incapable of fixing its attention for five consecutive minutes) requires us to be at the cost of all honesty, of all truth, and even the most elementary conception of art? But these are great names. I don't compare myself with them. I am *modern*, and I would rather recall Wagner the musician and Rodin the Sculptor who both had to starve a little in their day—and Whistler the painter who made Ruskin¹⁰ the critic foam at the mouth with scorn and indignation. They too have arrived. They had to suffer for being 'new'. And I too hope to find my place in the rear of my betters. But still—my place. My work shall not be an utter failure be-

⁹ Sir Walter Besant (1836-1901), novelist, who helped found the Society of Authors in 1884. See "Besant," D. N. B.

¹⁰ James A. McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) brought a libel suit against Ruskin for his attacks on him in *Fors Clavigera* (1877). Ruskin had once characterized a Whistler nocturne at the Grosvenor Gallery as "a pot of paint flung in the public face." See "Whistler," D. N. D.

cause it has the solid basis of a definite intention—first: and next because it is not an endless analysis of affected sentiments but in its essence it is action (strange as this affirmation may sound at the present time) nothing but action—action observed, felt and interpreted with an absolute truth to my sensations (which are the basis of art in literature)—action of human beings that will bleed to a prick, and are moving in a visible world.

This is my creed. Time will show. And this you may say is my overweening conceit. Well, no. I know <enou> well enough that I know nothing. I should like to think that some of my casual critics are in the possession of that piece of information about themselves. Starting from that knowledge one may learn to look on with some attention—at least. But enough of that.

Believe me, dear M^r Blackwood in all trust and confidence
yours JPH CONRAD.

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

30 Bryanston Street. W. [London] | 3rd, June. 1902.

MY DEAR CONRAD,

I have now heard from Edinburgh with the data I wished to see before I came to a decision regarding your proposal for a loan as contained in your letter of 31st May along with the Memorandum sent.

I have been weighing the matter most carefully, and it is with the deepest reluctance that I write to say that notwithstanding your friend Mr Galsworthy's readiness to guarantee payment of the yearly premiums on the Life Policy I do not see my way to falling in with your proposal to advance the amount you desire. In the present state of the publishing business and in view of the money already paid against the Youth volume we do not feel justified in risking another big sum which we do not see our way to realize from the copyrights you offer for a very long time to come.

I cannot close my letter without saying that while your proposal is one which on business grounds I cannot accept as advantageous to myself still, if you will allow me to say so, it is still less one, in my opinion, which in the long run would turn out to be good for yourself. Could you not lay your present state of affairs before Mr Galsworthy and ask his advice as I know he entertains the most warm and friendly feelings towards yourself.

Deeply regretting that I am unable to help you more in this anxious matter, believe me, | always Yours sincerely,

“WILLIAM BLACKWOOD”

J. Conrad, Esq.

P. S. I was nearly forgetting to send you the cheque for £30 to a/c payment of serial rights of story “The End of the Tether”, which I have now pleasure in enclosing you.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |

5 June 1902

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Many thanks for the cheque for £30 on acct of *The End of the Tether* received to-day

That story will contain 30 000 words. I understand that this will be sufficient to complete the volume in a satisfactory manner.

I would consider it a kindness if the proofs of the 1st inst.^{nt} were sent to me at your earliest convenience. The corrections however, I may safely promise, shall not be extravagant in extent; only I want time to look *into* the text a little.

This is the really important matter. For the rest pray be assured that I appreciate the tone of your reply. Your decision I regret of course and mainly because it will not allow me to dismiss <my> the subject from my mind which would be exclusively busy with the Troubles of Captain Whalley:—these having to come to their appointed end in the last week of June. How the days fly! From July to Oct: I shall be busy with the last third of my Rescue. Then, at once, I shall begin on a story of about

80000 words for which I shall allow myself a year: thus I have good hopes of being ready in 18 months with another work to try my further luck. It'll be a novel of intrigue with the Mediterranean, coast and sea, for the scene.¹

Believe me, dear M^r Blackwood, with the greatest regard
faithfully yours JPH. CONRAD.

¹ The first hint of the long-planned novel which was later to become *Suspense*.

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George Street, | Edinburgh, | 23rd June 1902.

MY DEAR CONRAD,

I have had pleasure in desiring an early copy of the July Maga to be sent you, and you will see that it opens with the first instalment of your story "The End of the Chapter" [*sic*], which it seems to me promises very well as far as one is able to judge from this part. It also appears to be admirably suited to go with the "Youth" volume. I find that Parts I-IV run to a little over 10,000 words, and I have therefore the pleasure of placing to your credit the sum of £25- 10/- in terms of the rate agreed on.

I had hoped to have received within the last few days if not the completion of the story at all events another instalment, and I trust that you will be able to have this before very long, more especially as we have to go to press again next month owing to Edinburgh Trade holidays.

Yours very sincerely,
(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

Joseph Conrad Esq.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |
24 June 1902

MY DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD.

The Story was completed (three days late) and lying on my study table, when, while we were, [*sic*] at dinner the lamp (just

carried in) exploded. When I ran back my whole table was in a blaze and unapproachable. All the blankets being upstairs by the time we had smothered and stamped out the flames both the MS and the type of Part II were one mass of charred remnants.

This is what Gen: Buller would call "rank bad luck".¹ I wired you first thing this morning and shall be on tenter-hooks till I get your reply. If the first inst^t contains only the Chap^s I to IV all is well—comparatively well; for I am confident of getting 4-5 thous: words ready again by next Sunday. That would be the 2 first Chap^s: of Part II? Then Chap^s 3 to 6 would make another instalment (the final one) of say 8-9 thou: words.

But if *all* Part 1st has gone into the July N^o the position is more difficult. I am buckling-to as if that was the case; and I believe that I <may> shall be ready by the 15th prox: with the last page of the story. Meantime I would send you the copy from day to day. The text is fresh in my mind.

I am more sorry for the bother I cause you than words can express. As far as common prudence goes I've nothing to reproach myself with. Yours faithfully

JPH CONRAD.

¹ His explanation for having failed to capture Colenso in the Boer War. See the *Times*, 11, 12 October 1901.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

The Pent. | 25 June 1902

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

To begin with—a word of congratulation on *The Conquest of Charlotte* coming to its most harmonious ending. My high opinion of this achievement, as a whole, you know. I have no critical vocabulary to express the very complex impression left upon my mind by the story; which, apart from its many other qualities, possesses the all-important one of being *interesting*. From a craftsman's point of view the ease and the compactness of effect are very striking—especially to a man who knows how much hard toil must be put into *Ease* and how much hard

thought is necessary to attain the effect of *compactness* in a work so long and so many sided. I don't go into detail but I dare say I've missed no point. As to picking holes—which is my instinctive propensity to do with every work of fiction—I confess that in this case I have been unable to lay hold of any loose ends. Truth to say I would just as soon try to find fault with a blade of grass or the outline of a hill. You will understand that the above remarks are the best tribute I can offer to the humanity and the sincerity of the story. The accomplished simplicity of your method I simply envy you with the real black envy of a man who is thousands of miles away from his heart's desire. And finally, charm—undeniable charm—is the last word I will say to characterize the whole of my feelings in regard to the story. All this is very lame, but it must serve, being insufficient but as far as it goes perfectly genuine.

I hope you have not resented my unceremonious manner of sending you the cheque. I was upset and done up with running about that day, and Jack was just writing to you. And you are always so sympathetic to me that it seemed as if you would understand my state of mind without a word. Then I put off writing to you till the story <was> for Maga was finished. Well, it was finished on Monday evening and it is almost worse as if it had not been written at all because being written it is burnt. The lamp in my room exploded while we were at dinner and I ran back just in time to see all the table in a blaze. We beat out the flames without damage to ourselves but there are only <three> four pages saved entire and the broken fragments of a dozen more out of both MS and typed copy. It is a heavy blow. I wired at once to E'gh whence I had a comforting reply. 4000 words are all that is needed for the next instalment and *that* I can rewrite by 2^d July I think. For the rest I shall have all the time I need.

Pardon this scrawl all round the paper. I am in fairly good health but of course feel the set back acutely. Kindest regards in which my Wife joins. | Always yours

J. CONRAD

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |
26 June 1902

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Thanks for your very welcome letter which I received the day after my little private disaster. I can manage 4 000 words—or perhaps a little more—in good time for the printing of the Augst number; and I promise faithfully to return proofs within 24 hours.

The sum (£25) with which you have credited me (against the £30 advanced) covers the 10 000 words instalment according to our agreement.

The pleasure of reading your favorable opinion was very great. I assure you that for all the unconscionable delay the *Youth* vol: has not been out of my mind for two days together. I am also gratified to see that you consider the subject suitable for the book form with the other two stories. It has been in my mind for this eighteen months past.

I felt the loss of my work acutely. It is completely gone all but 3 pages that escaped mysteriously and the fragments of about eleven more not amounting, all told, to one thousand legible words. The calamitous interruption of what was to be a great national manifestation¹ affected me too—as you may <Imagine> imagine.

However I may confide to you that I have already rebuilt a chapter of 2 000 words. My wife types it <too> to-day, and I take a rest helping my boy to drill holes in his wooden bricks—which is the latest craze. I have also written to Meldrum a few words of felicitation on the excellent end of *Charlotte*. This evening I shall start again and hope in the next three days to complete another chapter. It is a curious experience, like trying desperately to remember a lesson learned years ago. Believe me always faithfully yours. J. CONRAD.

¹ The Coronation of King Edward VII, scheduled for 26 June, was postponed, owing to the king's sudden illness. See the *Times*, 25 June 1902, 11.

[*Conrad to George Blackwood*]

[Stanford] July 15/02

DEAR M^r GEORGE.

Here's the stuff. I am too wretched and ashamed to apologize for the failure to keep decent time.

Anyway the stuff is all right; and the proof-reading of *Maga* is so near perfection that I am quite willing to forego all correcting of this batch if it is at all inconvenient to let me have the slips. the copy is not typed for my wife is not well. I fancy she had a scare tho' she worked like a professional fireman at the time. My handwriting is not very difficult to read I like to believe. Kind regards

Your CONRAD.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 18 July 1902*]

. . . Mr Clifford's letter about Conrad is good news. You spoke to me about the papers from the Literary Fund, but you will remember that, Conrad being so curiously tempered, it was agreed his views must be sounded first. I got a letter from Galsworthy, in answer to one of mine of inquiry from which I gathered something was on the carpet, and Galsworthy said the best way was to await developments. I am glad indeed they are of such a successful nature.¹ Poor Conrad! I am very glad for his sake. I expect to hear from him any day now. . . .

¹ See Introductory Essay, xxvi-xxvii

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |
22 July 1902

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

I delayed acknowledging the volume till I had read the story through to get a connected effect. It is, of course, incomparably greater than in the serial form. The story grips one more and

I am very glad that you were not well enough off to suppress the book form as you said you wished to do. Indeed it would have been an illegitimate use of wealth for all your discontent. The artist's destiny is not to be pleased with himself. We must leave that to Mr Carnegie though God knows what flaws *he* too in his dazzling career he may be groaning over in the secret of his heart.

I understand, tho' I do not agree with your discontent. We read over our work in a very wide awake frame of mind; whereas, when actually at work, the Homer nods at times in all of us. The shortcomings come to us with an extraordinary force; the flaws of the mood appear as great as the chasms of an earthquake and as fatal: but what is good we accept as a matter of course as if nothing less in achievement were our due.

I have closed the book with an increased feeling of its absolute value. There is skill and conviction and a wonderfully sustained mood—and not a moment of unworthy artifice. I most sincerely congratulate you on its complex unity so varied and so artistically preserved to the very last scene. To discuss the detail I am not fit; just now less than ever. I am utterly cast down and overwhelmed by the necessity of rewriting a finished thing and the impossibility to find again the mood.

No more for the present but my heartfelt thanks for the book and my wishes for its prosperity in the world.

Ever yours

CONRAD.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

Winchelsea, 3^d Aug 1902

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

I've just received your letter and cheque for £22.10 for which thanks. I've not yet seen the last *Maga* which has not been sent after me here. We return home on the fourth whence I shall write in a day or two.

I am glad you like the story and Mr Michie's praise is very

pleasant.¹ Proof and more copy shall be posted at the end of this week. Believe me always very faithfully yours

JPH CONRAD.

¹ Blackwood had probably enclosed a letter from Alexander Michie.

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George Street, | Edinburgh. | 29th Aug. 1902.

MY DEAR CONRAD,

I have the pleasure of enclosing you cheque £ 19 in acknowledgement of the September instalment of "The End of the Tether", which I think continues to make good progress. The interest seems to me to steadily increase, and the story has now reached a stage which holds the attention of the reader.

I hope you will be able to send me a further instalment of copy on good time this month, and will you kindly give me some idea whether you are likely to run beyond October number.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

Joseph Conrad Esq^{re}.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |

1st Sept 1902

DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD.

The arrangement of our posts has prevented me acknowledging sooner the receipt of the cheque.

Thanks for kind words and acts. As to the last <inst> instalment: I think 13 [thousand] words in all may do it. I am now straining every fibre to throw it off.

In any case the October N^o shall see the end.

Pardon this disjointed letter. Always yours faithfully

JPH. CONRAD.

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT.

[September, 1902]

DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD

Our little boy got suddenly ill and my typist had [to] turn nurse; this is why the last few pages are sent in MS. Another a slightly longer inst^t shall see the end

Tomorrow I shall return to you the corrections of the previous parts for book form. .

Is it really possible for the book to be issued in October?

I shall try to send my copy early; this month if possible for I am anxious to see a vol of mine appear at last.

Pardon my disconnected scrawl I am extremely tired physically and mentally. Always very faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD

Date: Blackwood's acknowledgment of the receipt of the corrected pages for the *Youth* volume, 29 September 1902.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

[Stanford, Autumn 1902?]

MY DEAR M^r MELDRUM.

This is all that Jessie has been able to find. The Q. C. thing on *Youth*¹ however is there and it may be of some use. Another cutting relates to *H of D*

Kindest regards from us both | Always yours

JPH. CONRAD

Date: The *Youth* volume appeared about 21 November 1902. Gordan, 266. At some time previous to this date, Meldrum, we may assume, had asked Conrad for copies of early reviews of individual stories which might promote the sales of the book.

¹ See letter of 7 January 1902, footnote, above.

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George St., | Edinburgh, | Sep. 29—1902

MY DEAR CONRAD

I have the pleasure of enclosing you cheque £22. 10/- in acknowledgement of the October instalment of "The End of the Tether". The story develops excellently, and I am looking forward with much interest to reading the concluding instalment which I hope you will be able to send me in good time for the November number.

I was glad to receive back from you the corrected pages for the reprint in the "Youth" volume, which now I fear cannot be published by the date we originally intended, but I hope within the first week of November.

Yours very truly

(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD

Joseph Conrad Esq^{re}.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |

25 Oct 1902

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

I did not write when sending the last of the copy; I was far from well, and the experience of rewriting a story already dismissed from the mind and with the mood of its production vanished was absolutely nightmarish. Like a man awakening from a bad dream I was glad to lie passively on my back for a while enjoying the feelings of relief.

I am awaiting now the proofs of the book. In that form there'll be another page (of print) to add at the end. I anticipate no other corrections, and forty-eight hours shall suffice to do all that's necessary.

The vol: won't be so bad upon the whole, though not so

good as is due to your patience and kindness. *That* could be only recognized adequately by the production of a masterpiece of which I am incapable. So I must even [ever] remain in your debt to the end of time.

With the proofs I shall send the epigraph¹—two lines of Keats—for the title page, and the dedication—*not* to M^r Henley, this time. With all deference to your better judgment I would suggest that the vol: should be made uniform with *Lord Jim*. Believe me dear M^r Blackwood always yours faithfully

JPH CONRAD.

¹ The volume, dedicated to his wife, bears an epigraph from Grimm's *Tales*: "But the Dwarf answered: 'No; something human is dearer to me than all the wealth of the world.'"

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

45 George St., | Edinburgh. | 30th Octr 1902

MY DEAR CONRAD

I have the pleasure of enclosing you cheque £22-10/- in acknowledgment of the November instalment of "The End of the Tether". It was impossible for me to give thirty-five pages of the story in the number, so I broke it in two, at I think a most interesting part. It seems to me that you have been very successful with the working out of the story, and the end is most effective.

I am sorry for the delay in the publication of the book, but you could not have done justice to the story in less space, & though you had a heavy and sore task in rewriting so much of it I feel the story has not suffered and I trust that its success in vol. form will be some well earned compensation to you. Hoping you are feeling better now.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD

Joseph Conrad Esq

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |
5 Nov. 1902

MY DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD.

The proofs went last night to the station for the last train as the stupid post leaves here at 4 pm and I wanted to send the additional matter typed and properly corrected.

Now the story is properly finished as originally contemplated and thus it is meant for the book form. It would be a great pleasure to me if the last instalment in *Maga* could be extended so as to make the serial form and the book form identical.

I doubt not that your judgment will approve the full ending which is in no sense an amplification of anything. It is almost word for word as it stood in the destroyed MS.

As for the suggestions for the title page I leave it to your experience whether they are to be carried out wholly or partly as it commends itself to you: or not at all if you prefer to let the page stand. To the epigraph I suppose there can be no objection; the dedication is <a> purely a private transaction. With that sort of dedication the public can have no concern. It would not have been the case if I had dedicated to M^r Henley as I had half a mind to do. Later on perhaps I may offer that tribute to the man who befriended my early work and has remained friendly ever since. The time is not yet I think.

I should very much like to see my correction in the list of works adopted, especially in what touches Lord Jim. The other is of lesser importance.

Many thanks for the cheque which I found on my return home from a bout of dissipation in London. We overstayed the leave we have given ourselves and this accounts for the delay in returning the proofs.

I saw M^r James twice and have had with him some discourse whose business part must have been communicated to you by this time. I was very sorry to understand that your health has not been quite weather proof of late. I had also the pleasure of lunching with my good friend Meldrum and with Jack Gals-

worthy who wishes to be remembered to you. With kind regard I remain, dear Mr Blackwood

Always yours J. CONRAD

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

[Stanford] Friday. [Autumn 1902?]

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

I snatch a piece of MS paper to thank your [you] for your good letter received today. Mine to you went on Thursday morning.

Yes. Hermann and his wife are the people I wanted to *do*: the story of Falk being more or less of a foil to the main purpose. However I thought that I did bring his personality out towards the end distinctly enough. I [*sic*] if I did not—as I fear—it is simply want of skill in finding the essential trait in an image clear enough to my own eye. I wanted to make him stand for so much that I neglected, in a manner, to set him on his feet. This is one of my weaknesses—one of these things that make me swear at a finished work so often.

I am heartened greatly by what you say of the wretched "Tether". The old man does not wobble it seems to me. The Elliot episode has a fundamental significance in so far that it exhibits the first weakening of old Whalley's character before the assault of poverty. As you notice he says nothing of his position but goes off and takes advantage of the information. At the same time it gives me the opportunity to introduce Massy from way back without the formal narrative paragraphs. But the episode is mainly the first sign of that fate we carry within us. A character like Whalley's cannot cease to be frank with impunity. He is not frank with his old friend—such as the old friend is. For, if Elliot had been a genuine sort of man Whalley's secrecy would have been that of an intolerable fool. The pathos for me is in this that the concealment of his extremity is as it were forced upon him. Nevertheless it is weakness—it is deterioration. Next he conveys a sort of false impression to

Massy—on justifiable grounds. I indicate the progress of <de-
terioration> the shaking the character receives and make it
possible thus to by and by present the man as concealing the
oncoming of blindness—and so on; till at least [*sic*] he conceals
the criminal wrecking of his ship by com[m]itting suicide. And
always there is just that shadow, that ghost of justification which
<makes> should secure the sympathy of the reader.

Pardon this long discourse. I want to give you an idea
how the figure works. Upon the episodes, after all, the effect
of reality depends and as to me I depend upon the reader
looking back upon my story as whole. This is why I prefer the
form which needs for its development 30000 words or so. When
it runs into 120 thou:—like *Jim* it reaches failure. But let
that pass.

Kindest regards. Always yours
J. CONRAD

Date: Conrad sent the final instalment of "The End of the Tether" to Black-
wood by 25 October 1902. See letter above. I am assuming that Meldrum
read the story after this date.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 22 November 1902*]

. . . And I wonder what you think of the suggestion of
a paper on Conrad's volume by Hugh Clifford,¹ for Jany. . . .

¹ See footnote, letter of 4 December 1902, below.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

Private

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, | NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |
27 Nov 1902

MY DEAR M^r MELDRUM.

I had rather not; moreover I haven't got a photograph, not
a single copy; and I won't sit on purpose as two years ago I've
refused to do so for D^r Robertson Nicoll who wanted to put me
into the Bookman.

A criticism of the book is all right, but my face has nothing to do with my writing.

If I were a pretty actress or a first rate athlete I wouldn't deprive an aching democracy of a legitimate satisfaction.

In '96 a photograph of me appeared in the *Sketch* I think. I let myself be persuaded. Two columns of colossally stupid letter press accompanied it.¹ No more.

Believe me always yours

J. CONRAD

¹ See "The Book and its Story: *An Outcast of the Islands*," *The Sketch*, 6 May 1896, 62. The photograph was by Russell and Sons, Baker Street, W.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYPHE, | KENT. |

4th Dec 1902

DEAR MR BLACKWOOD.

Your letter has been a great pleasure in matter and in tone for you know how much I prize the friendliness of your feeling and your appreciation of my work.

The reviews are coming in. I've written to thank Clifford for his *Spectator* article;¹ and I hear that the Academy has allotted two columns to Garnett to discourse upon Conrad.² This generosity is striking, the more so that the man pitched upon is not likely to make capital of the crowning of *Youth*.

Next work to my hand will be to finish a story begun some seven years ago of which a good third is to be written.³ I am getting up steam for it, slowly, very slowly. Nevertheless I hope to be done with it in March.

To follow that I've a subject which may be treated in 30-40 thou: words: the form I like best but which I believe is in no favour with the public. The subject is difficult however and it

¹ Hugh Clifford, "The Art of Mr. Joseph Conrad," *The Spectator*, 89 (1902), 827-828.

² Edward Garnett, "Mr. Conrad's New Book," *The Academy*, 63 (1902), 606-607.

³ *The Rescue*.

may take up a great part of the next year in the working out.

I would avail myself eagerly and on every possible occasion of the hospitality you offer me, so kindly, in the pages of *Maga*;⁴ but the fact is that I doubt profoundly the value of my ideas upon things in general and on any single thing in particular; and this not morbidly, I trust, but with judgment and in view of a definite ideal in the substance of thought as well as in expression. But of course one doesn't know till one tries.

Excellent, the last number of *Maga*, especially *In the Track of the War*⁵ and the N. Munro's instalment.⁶ First rate, his new story; most promising.

I trust, dear Mr Blackwood, that this horrid weather has not tried you too much. It has been bad enough here to stop my writing with its gloom and the uproar of wind around the house. My health keeps good however; all I need is a little sunshine now and again.

Believe me, my dear Sir, always faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

PS/ Kind regards to Mr George Blackwood. I forgot to acknowledge in the body of the letter the safe receipt of the cheque for £25 for which my thanks.

⁴ See letter of 15 August 1901, above.

⁵ "In the Tracks of War," *Blackwood's*, 172 (1902), 781-793.

⁶ Neil Munro, *Children of the Tempest: A Tale of the Outer Isles*, *ibid.*, 755-777.

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 19 December 1902*]

. . . You will be in great glee, I'm sure, about *Maga* and the business we are doing at 37. I am especially glad about "Youth". But I knew Conrad was good—in fact "Youth" I hold to be the most notable book we have published since George Eliot, and so do other judges. "Lord Jim" and "Youth" will go on selling for twenty years, I have no doubt; and it will become a question soon whether they ought not to be put in more popular

—say 3/6d—form, like “Ships”.¹ That appears to be the recognised method with the works of men of his high, tho’ not popular, repute.

P.S. I am sending out slips *re* Youth to many people. . . .

¹ Beatrice Harraden (1864-1936), *Ships that Pass in the Night*, Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, twentieth ed., 1900.

[Conrad to William Blackwood]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |

22 Dec. 1902

MY DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD

I don’t know how it is in Scotland but here after the late severe weather a thaw set in which has melted even the frigidity of the Athenaeum. They gave me a line in the Contents all to myself and a column and a half inside.¹ I must say I am pleased.

Edwd Clodd (I’ve never met him) wrote me an appreciative letter enclosing one from Gissing to him.² What Gissing says of Youth is not meet for me to repeat, even to you; but he ends by entreating Clodd to talk about the book to every man and woman he knows. This is showing a practical interest.

And since finishing the E of the T I have not written anything that I can bring myself to let stand: that is, practically, I’ve done just nothing. It’s awful—awful.

This, is all my news.

I trust that some time in 1903 I’ll have something to knock at Maga’s door with. But perhaps you won’t have me? But let me tell you that I am no longer obscure. A publication called the “Smart Set”³—heavens! What a name—has asked me, this

¹ “Short Stories,” *The Athenaeum* (20 December 1902), 824.

² “No man at present writing fiction,” wrote Gissing, “has such imaginative vigour, and such wonderful command of language, as Joseph Conrad. I think him a *great* writer—there’s no other word.” *Letters to Edward Clodd from George Gissing*, Printed for Private Circulation, 1914, 46 (30 November 1902.)

³ *The Smart Set. A Magazine of Cleverness*, New York, London, 1900-1925.

very day, for a short story of 3-4 thou: words. An airy trifle of a thing—don't you know.

After I had recovered from the fit. . . . No. I won't go into details. Suffice it to say that when I reached the stage of cool reflexion and realized that there were men, good, decent clever men, not only able but willing to sit down and write the demanded story—I asked myself seriously whether it would have been my loss or my gain if I too had been able and willing to sit down and write a story, simply because somebody was ready to pay for it?

I am going to ask the London office for three more copies. I want one for Paris ("Mercure de France"), one for Dr Yrjö Hirn a professor in the university of Helsingfors who, with his wife, has translated some of the Tales of Unrest into Swedish, and had a critical article on my work in a Stockholm paper some time ago.⁴ The third I want to send to Poland, for the very young lions of an extremely modern literary review in Warsaw, the *Chimera*.⁵ Let them chew it up and snarl over the flavour of the fossil. The Putnams published lately a story of mine (Typhoon) in a small vol.⁶ They had not the elementary humanity to send me a proof nor the civility to send me a copy. However I obtained one. It has been set up from an uncorrected MS; the consequence is that I am made to provide ventilators for a hole—a contrivance worthy of American genius for invention.

Pardon this long document—which does not require an answer however; and with my best wishes for yourself and your nephews for the coming year, I am, dear Mr Blackwood always faithfully yours.

JPH. CONRAD

⁴ "En roman om domet och fegheten (Fragment ur en läge studie öfver Joseph Conrad)," *Euterpe*, 1902, No. 7, pp. 1-7. "Om Conrad, Lord Jim," *Omtryckt*, I, No. 246. See *Yggjö Hirns Verksamhet, svenka Litteratursällskapet*, Helsingfors, Finland, 1953.

⁵ *The Chimera*, an illustrated monthly magazine, was founded in 1901. The file in the British Museum runs to ten volumes.

⁶ A separate edition of *Typhoon*. When the first complete edition was published in England (1903), three other stories were included. Keating, 110.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | 1st Jan. 1903.

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

Your letter has been a rare pleasure. Indeed my dear Sir your message of good will would have been especially prized even if it had come in a great rush of congratulatory correspondence—which it did not. Only one other friend wrote.

And, believe me, there's no mans voice more welcome than yours—from a perfect confidence in the genuine[ne]ss of your feeling and from the way your words go straight to the heart. I am touched by what you say and by your manner of saying it—and by the thought you've given me on the last day of the old Year. And in return writing my first letter on the first day of the New Year I can find no better Words than your own in wishing you both happiness: "in yourselves, in your children, in your work." There you have resumed all that may be found in life; and in the sincere desire that it should be your lot for this year and all years, that other genuine friend of mine—my wife joins me with all her heart.

Believe me always yours

J. CONRAD.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood and Sons*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NR. HYTHE, | KENT. |
16th. February 1903

DEAR SIRS,

I desire to inform you that I have appointed Mr. James Brand Pinker of Effingham House, Arundel Street, Strand, W. C. my sole Agent for the conduct of all business relating to my literary work, and I have also for valuable consideration authorized him to receive all moneys due to me in respect of my works. I shall be glad therefore if you will account to him in due course accordingly.

Yours faithfully
JOSEPH. CONRAD.

To

Messrs. William Blackwood & Sons,
45, George Street,
Edinburgh.

[*In pencil*] Mr. Morton—Please acknowledge & then send both letters for Mr Meldrum & Mr James to see them. W. B.

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |
19 Mch 1903

DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD.

Thanks for your letter and the enclosure from Toronto which I suppose I may keep.

Not being a professional celebrity I am writing to say that if he will promise <me> to send me his photograph, he shall have mine directly I get myself "taken".

I also say that I am gratified—which is very strictly true.

The "Mercure de France" notice is agreeable—and as he reproduces what I have been lately talking at him as to French fiction I am flattered.¹

Your kindly expressed hope as to my wellbeing finds me, alas! with my leg up and exhaling groans still—but getting better. I trust that you have passed unscathed t[h]rough this period of storms and floods and atmospheric horrors.

With kind regards to your nephews, believe me dear Sir
very faithfully yours

JPH. CONRAD.

¹ *Mercure de France*, Série Moderne, 45 (1903), 830-831. H. D. Davray, the editor, maintains that French fiction is too largely preoccupied with sex, a reflection, apparently, of Conrad's views.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | 23 Mch 1903

MY DEAR M^r MELDRUM.

I am just emerging from an awful attack of gout. A state of extraordinary nervous irritation from which I have been suffering ever since the beginning of the year was bound to end in something of that kind. It was very bad, but now the worst is over I feel myself able to work.

I am now very busy with "Nostromo: a story" of which I have said a few words to you when we last met. It will grow to 60 or 70 thound words after all; and if the serialization can be detached from the book form, that last shall be offered to the Firm. Such is my wish and only hard necessity places any reservation on it. Indeed if I am ever to breathe freely this year I must squeeze <all> the utmost of money out of that book. I hope I shall finish it about end June.¹

How is the world using you? The last time I saw you I could not have left a very favourable impression. Was I very mad? That sometimes I am mad there is not the slightest doubt of in my mind.

My wife joins me in kind regards. | Always yours

JPH. CONRAD.

PS The acct to end of year states 1200 copies of *Youth* sold here and 500 in the Colonies. Is that good for an Author like me? *Typhoon* volume is coming out on the 22^d Ap: I'll send you a copy of course.

¹ *Nostromo* was finished 30 August 1904. *Aubry*, I, 332.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | 29 July 1903

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

I am neither dead nor as forgetful as it may seem. I have been—and still am—driving on hard with a story for the

Harpers.¹ The work may not be as congenial as some I've done before—but the terms are the best I've ever had.

I tell you this because I know you wish me well. Never before had I so much need of my friend's good wishes; for indeed, indeed, I fear this thing will turn out a very great trash!

That's in confidence; but the fact is I find it difficult to sit close just because of that suspicion.

Perhaps you will accept the photographic caricature² <who> of a man who however worried has a warm thought for you every day.

Our kindest regards to Mrs Meldrum and yourself. Believe me always yours

JPH. CONRAD

¹ *Nostramo*.

² Reproduced elsewhere in this volume through the courtesy of Miss Meldrum.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |
26th Dec 1903.

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

It was very good of all in Muswell Hill to remember Borys. Nothing could have pleased him better than the gift and his excitement at seeing "how Betty looked" was very great.

They are dear delightful children, with lots of individuality in their faces so different and yet so subtly alike. And there does not seem to be anything the matter with their health. That you may watch through long years their unclouded happiness and prosperity is the best wish I can send you and your Wife in this season of wishes.

Borys sends his love to Betty and Jan. He is extremely anxious to see them; and we hope that he may have that pleasure before long—not to speak of ours. The Hueffers have taken a house in London for a few months and ask us to stay with them for a few days early in January. If that comes to pass we shall appear in a body on your doorstep before the New Year is many days old.

Of myself I have a dread to speak. It has been a most disastrous year for my work. If I had written each page with my blood I could not feel more exhausted at the end of this twelvemonth. And <there> the tale of pages is not yet complete!

My wife joins me in kindest regards and love for the children from their unknown friend Borys' father and mother. Pray express our most friendly sentiments to Mrs Meldrum—and believe me always yours with the most cordial regard

JOSEPH CONRAD.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | 5th Ap. 1904.

DEAR M^r MELDRUM.

We came to London end Jan^r for a fortnight and before we had been there a week my poor wife had a nasty fall in the street putting out both knee caps.

This was bad enough, to be laid up in London lodgings with the bother and expense of doctor, nurse, massage surgical appliances and so on—not to speak of the pain to the patient and the anxiety for me. I was far from well myself after a year of ill health and making desperate efforts to get on with my story. On the top of that came the failure of my bankers (Watson & C^o)

This is not the worst however. My poor wife who has been <for> complaining of not feeling very well ever since last Oct was found to have a valvular defect of the heart. After nearly two months of worry in London (I going on working all the time to stave off utter annihilation) I got her down here. The doctors in consultation have sent her to bed for six weeks both for her heart and her knee. She certainly can't walk and it looks bad; it looks as if she were to be a helpless cripple. The words as I write give a shudder. There is something seriously wrong with the left leg which she had injured in the same

way many years before. It is obviously wasting. She has (even in bed) surgical appliances on both.

She has been now laid up for 3 weeks. Her heart seems better; but now, after all her anxieties and shocks she had, her nerves are giving way and as I write to you in her bedroom she is lying lightheaded and groaning with neuralgia in all the limbs.

I myself have just got over an attack of gout. I stiffen my back but I feel the tension nearing the breaking point. I've here a typewriter to whom I am dictating the last part of *Nostromo*. What the stuff is like God only knows. Half the time I feel on the verge of insanity. The difficulties are accumulating around me in a frightful manner. Pardon this dismal letter following on such a long silence. I had not the heart to write; and I may just as well have kept silent now but for my desire to assure you of my great and unalterable regard.

I can write no more.

Kindest messages from us both to Mrs Meldrum and the children

Yours

CONRAD.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

[London] Tuesday. [November 1904]

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM

Many thanks for your good letter. I don't answer it at length just now. I want only to tell you that an operation is fixed for Thursday midday.

There is every reason to expect a complete success; and the poor woman is extremely anxious to be carved for no other reason but that she would be more useful to me and the boy in the future. We must put off naming the day for your dinner (which I am loth to forego) till that business is over.

Please assure Mrs Meldrum of my grateful <regards>

regard for her genuine kindness to us all. Love to the dear chicks

Always yours

J. CONRAD

Date: In a letter of 15 December 1904, Conrad speaks of the operation on his wife's damaged knee as having taken place "three weeks ago." Gee & Sturm, 105.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

[London, November 1904]

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM

Just a word to say I am still somewhat seedy, and apologize for my behaviour on Mond: evening.

My wife is getting on famously I went out yesterday to see her. She wishes to be remembered to you with thanks for the flowers. . . . Her kindest and most friendly regards to Mrs Meldrum and love to the little ones. Always yours

J. CONRAD

Date: See the note to the letter above.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

Villa di Maria. | Isola di Capri | Napoli. | 22 Jan 1905.

MY DEAR M^r MELDRUM.

I waited to thank you for your wire till I could send you my address. We have been infinitely pleased and touched by your kind message which was put into my hand at the moment Jessie was being carried down the gangway on board the boat in Dover.¹ They did it in the most lubberly and dangerous manner I must say; but the arrangements in France from Calais onwards have been most excellent good men and well devised

¹ The trip to Capri was undertaken as a means of hastening Mrs. Conrad's recuperation in a warmer climate. "My wife has been operated 3 months ago for damage to knee joint. Her general state was not good either. So we had to come here for recovery. All this nearly broke my back. . . ." To Neil Munro, 13 March 1905. MS: Mr. McGrigor Donald.

carrying chairs being in waiting in Paris at stations and in the hotel where we spent the night. From there to Rome we had no trouble; but in Rome where we had to change trains with only 15 minutes to do it in they nearly dropped my poor wife off the platform of the car in their excitement and hurry. She was the only one not to be frightened. My hair stood on end and the nurse nearly fainted. However a miss is as good as a mile. We arrived in Naples 2½ hours late at 2 o'clock in the morning—snow on the ground and a bitter North wind blowing. The Cook's <man> interpreter waiting for us with the chair and carriers looked the very picture of misery. As to the carriage which was ordered it had gone home simply. Fortunately, we were able to capture the only hotel omnibus in waiting; and the hotel captured us to some purpose—for we had to remain weatherbound in Naples for five solid days. On two of these the boat for Capri never left at all and on the others the weather was still too boisterous to admit of landing an invalid. I thought I had foreseen everything but I had not foreseen that. This waiting was a most wretched business—apart from being atrociously costly. At last, taking the first chance, we got landed here yesterday by moonlight the whole population (I should say) of the Marina turning out on the jetty to see the fun. The Captain took his steamer in as close in as he dared and a special big rowing boat came off to do the trans-shipping. The uproar was something awful; but I must say that for all their yelling these Italians did their work extremely well; and though the thing looked (and to my wife must have felt) dangerous I had not a moment uneasiness. The whole affair which had afforded the population of Capri so much innocent enjoyment cost me 40 fr[an]cs or so—and I don't grudge them. To feel settled at last and able to go to work <is> was well worth the money. Today the sun shone and Jessie has been resting on a warm terrace.

She has stood the journey perfectly well and looks as fresh as paint. I feel rather limp now. But the best of the joke is that the Nurse has gone to pieces completely. She went to bed directly we got into the house and remains at the time of writing.

That's my usual luck; and it is serious enough because every day is of extreme importance for massage and the bending of the knee. I can only hope she will get up tomorrow—but who knows?

Such is the history of our voyage. And if I can only get to work in earnest nothing else matters much.

Jessie sends her love to all your house. I can't tell you how pleased she was at your kind wire. She wanted to write to your wife this evening but I dissuaded her, tho' I admit she did not look tired. In Naples the anxiety about the landing and the fretting over the delay had kept [her?] nervous all the time.

Tomorrow I take up the task again. I know I have your good wishes and I can assure you that no man's good will and friendship is more prized here than yours. Believe me most cordially yours

JPH. CONRAD.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |
29 May 1905

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM.

We returned about the 20th and came to London where I fully expected and looked forward to the great very great pleasure of seeing you. But just note my luck. The second night in town a horrible fit of gout came on and I could feel at once it was going to be no joke. So I got myself brought back here while I could yet stand being moved; and I've been groaning for 3 days and nights. Today, after having finished groaning, I am sitting up sufficiently to be able to scribble this to you.

Let me know by a word how you all are; and before everything give my wife's Love to Mrs Meldrum and the children. She has been so disappointed at not being able to see all your family! It is my fault entirely or rather the fault of my con-founded infirmity.

As I still hope and look forward to seeing you soon I wont enlarge upon the story of our residence in Capri. It will be

enough for your good and tried friendship to hear that my wife came back immensely improved. As far as she's concerned the whole cruel and expensive affair has been a success. For myself I must sadly confess that I've done nothing or next to nothing in Capri.

But of that later.

Jack Galsworthy (whom I saw in Italy) writes me asking whether the two little poems of Mottram are going to find a place in *Maga* soon? It seems the poor youngster in whom we both take some interest is <very> generally unhappy and to see himself in print would wind him up morally. So I venture to mention the matter, for I know your kindness is great and the little bits of verse are not so bad after all.

The news I have is that the Stage Society wishes to perform my little play "To-Morrow" next June.¹ I am rather glad of it for it will be instructive for me and besides may give me chance for something bigger by and bye. G.B.S. seems to think very well of my first essay in play writing.²

Pardon this illegible scribble. Remember me kindly please, to Mrs Meldrum. | Always yours

JPH. CONRAD.

PS May I ask Messrs. B'wood to send me 2 copies of "*Youth*" which I want to present to some people abroad.

¹ Performed 25 June 1905 under the title "One Day More." Aubry, II, 2.

² See letters in Aubry, II, 17, 19, 21.

[*William Blackwood to J. B. Pinker*]

[Edinburgh] 6 June 1905

DEAR M^r PINKER

I have read with pleasure the short article by Mr Joseph Conrad entitled "Her Captivity"¹ which you sent me in the end of last month, and now have pleasure in accepting it for my Magazine. It is perhaps not Mr Conrad at his best. In extent

¹ *Blackwood's* 178 (1905), 325-333. "Her Captivity" becomes "In Captivity," Sections 33-36 of *The Mirror of the Sea*. Wise, 33.

I calculate that the MS. runs to about 4,000 words, and the honorarium I am prepared to place to the credit of the sum advanced by me to Mr Conrad is £13.

With regard to date of publication, it will suit my arrangements if you can manage to place the paper in America for publication in September or October numbers, but it will be necessary for me to know definitely when you have finally decided upon a date, so will you please advise me what arrangements you may make?

I am, | Yours very truly.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD

James B. Pinker, Esq.,

[*Extract: Meldrum to William Blackwood, 28 July 1905*]

. . . I return you my proof of "Her Captivity". What a passionate observer Conrad has been all his days, and how great distinction he gives to the slightest of his writing. . . .

[*William Blackwood to Conrad*]

[Edinburgh] 3rd Aug 05

MY DEAR CONRAD

It gives me much pleasure once more to enclose you a proof to correct for Maga, not that much correcting or revision is necessary as "Her Captivity"¹ seems to read so well. It is a powerful and tellingly written sketch of your experiences in Port, and, from even what little I have seen of docks and quays, a very life-like and truthful description. Your account of the old mate Mr B. made one feel very sad but it is I fear awfully true of those grand old sailors now fast disappearing from among our own nation.

¹ *Pinker to Blackwood, 5 July 1905*: "I have since consulted Mr. Conrad, and while he feels disappointed that you do not think the article justifies a larger fee than £13, he is willing that the arrangement should stand as you suggest." See Appendix A.

I shall be glad if you will let me have proof back corrected for press on or before the 11th.

I have not heard anything of you and Mrs Conrad for a long time, but I hope to find you both well and all the better for the beautiful summer we have had.

Believe me, | Yrs sincerely
(signed) W. B.

Joseph Conrad Esq

[*Conrad to William Blackwood*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |
9th <July> Aug^t 1905.

DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD.

I was glad to get proofs for 'Maga' and it was kind of you to write the friendly note.

I've returned the slips yesterday after making a few verbal alterations.

Thanks for your kind inquiries. My wife is fairly well now. We spent the winter in Italy, in Capri: but the weather was not favourable.

The other day I saw M^r Meldrum and heard from him with great satisfaction that you were enjo[y]ing fair health.

I am, my dear Sir, always faithfully yours

JOSEPH CONRAD.

[*William Blackwood to J. B. Pinker*]

[Edinburgh] 22nd September, 1905.

DEAR MR PINKER.

I am now able to write you about Mr Conrad's MS. entitled "Initiation."¹ I have enjoyed reading it very much and have pleasure in accepting it for publication in the January number

¹ Pinker had forwarded a copy of "Initiation" on 5 September. "Mr. Conrad hopes that you will think this worthy of a higher fee." See Appendix A.

of my Magazine.² The sum I propose to put to Mr Conrad's credit is £22. It will make about 13 pages.

I am, | Yours very truly.

(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD

J. B. Pinker, Esq.,

² *Blackwood's*, 179 (1906), 1-14. "Initiation" became Sections 35-36 of *The Mirror of the Sea*. Quinn, 181. "Her Captivity" and "Initiation" were collected in "*Blackwood*" *Tales from the Outposts*: VI, *Tales of the Sea*, edited by Lieutenant-Colonel L. A. Bethell, Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1933.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. |

5th Jan. 1906.

MY DEAR M^r MELDRUM.

Many thanks for your kind thought of Borys and your good letter to me. I don't know what you may think of my silence? Nothing very hard I hope.

I spent Xmas in bed. I had fifteen days of most horrible gout in these awful lodgings. I could not write to you. I am getting ashamed of my constant invalidism and of my persistent calamities.

I got up on New Year's eve and on the 3^d I took Borys down here with the nurse. We arrived at noon without mishap but by midnight the poor little devil developed a most alarming heart attack with swelling of hands and feet and a terrific pulse. Half the day yesterday I was hunting up doctors in torrents of rain. To-day I am just told he has got over the worst of it. So be it; but to look at him is not very reassuring. His face is twice its normal size. He's propped up with many pillows and has the Lighthouse on his knees. He wishes me to tell you that he will call it Skerryvore, and that it works very well. I must tell we didn't let him have it in the nursing home. It is difficult to disinfect toys and he would have had to leave it there most likely.

Here's the whole story.

Our most affectionate regards to you all with best wishes for your peace and happiness. | Always yours

JPH CONRAD.

[*In Meldrum's hand*] Ans.

[*Conrad to Meldrum*]

PENT FARM, | STANFORD, NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | 11 Jan 06.

MY DEAR M^r MELDRUM

Now the little boy is better I have in a certain measure regained my wits: and I perceive I've utterly forgotten to refer to the Whitefriars Club invitation.

I have once already declined one with profuse thanks. As a matter of fact I am always either desperately gouty or desperately busy. Moreover that sort of thing is not in my way. I've systematically declined all such invitations from various quarters and therefore can not in logic and decency accept this one—though I am very sensible of the honour.

Perhaps you could say that nicely for me.

I long for a talk with you but can't get away from here just now. Our kindest regards and love to your House.

Always yours

JPH CONRAD.

[*In Meldrum's hand*] Ans.

[*William Blackwood to J. B. Pinker*]

[Edinburgh] 25th April. 1906.

DEAR MR PINKER,

I am sorry I must disappoint Mr Conrad about his new story "The Brute: A Piece of Invective."¹ I do not care for it sufficiently to avail myself of it for the Magazine. The idea of the story is very much the same as that used in "The Edge of

¹ "The Brute" appeared in the *Daily Chronicle*, 5 December 1906, and was collected in *A Set of Six* (1908). Wise, 37.

Circumstance" by Mr Edward Noble,² which I published a short time ago which for me at all events takes away from the freshness of the sketch.

I enclose the MS. with regret, but in the circumstances, I feel I cannot do otherwise. I hope, however, that I may have the pleasure of receiving through you another story from Mr Conrad before very long.

I am, | Yours very truly.

(signed) WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

J. B. Pinker, Esq.

² Edward Noble (1857-1941), *The Edge of Circumstance: Story of the Sea*, Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1904.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

Riche Hotel | Montpellier. | 4 Jan 1907

MY DEAR MR MELDRUM

No end of thanks for your good letter. Every word from you is valued more than you can think.

Our dearest wishes for your uninterrupted prosperity. We have sent a box of preserved fruit a speciality of this town to Mrs Meldrum; but I am afraid it did not reach your house on New Years day as all the establishments here were overwhelmed with orders.

The Knife—so Complete and Magnificent—has made Borys very happy. It was good of you to think of the little Chap

I have been so awfully depressed that I positively ran away from the Pent. Here we have found plenty of sunshine but also lots of wind. I had a small touch of influenza which stopped my writing¹ for a few days.

I can see daylight if I get two clear years before me without gout or other devilish hindrances. I am trying to pull myself together for a sustained effort.

With my wifes love to all your home in which I join.

Always yours

CONRAD

¹ *Chance*. Aubry, II, 39.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

SOMERIES, | LUTON, BEDS. | 1st Jan 1908.

DEAR M^r MELDRUM.

May every good attend you and yours through all this coming year and for all years to come.

I haven't had the heart to write after our return from our disastrous trip abroad. Borys had two illnesses, both grave, one of them rh[e]umatic fever with pleuresy [*sic*]. We went away for 8 weeks and had to stay no less than eight months away in hotels with doctors hovering around all the time. It was a ghastly and ruinous time—it won't bear talking about.

Since we got back and moved (in September) into this new home I have had gout twice. From the last bout I've just got up today. I would not begin a new year in bed.

Don't think that my silence arose from forgetfulness. That could not be. No day passes for me without mental reference to the few good friends of whom you are one. We have been deeply touched at you and dear Mrs Meldrum remembering the boy. I can't tell you sufficiently how glad I am. The last book hasn't done so well as it looks on the surface. Still Methuen professes himself very well satisfied.¹

Believe me always with great regard and affection

J. CONRAD.

¹ Methuen published *The Secret Agent*, 10 September 1907. See letter of that date to Harriet Capes. MS: Yale.

[Conrad to Meldrum]

ALDINGTON, | NR. HYTHE, | KENT. | <30> 31st Dec '09

MY DEAR M^r MELDRUM.

It was a great pleasure to see your handwriting. In any case I would have written today; so do not look upon this letter as an answer. You may be certain that in this household neither you nor yours can be forgotten. Our best wishes for next year go out to you as sincere as any the many friends you have known how to conquer can form.

Please remember always that if it [is] a long time since I've seen you I haven't seen much of anybody else. There can be no question here of coldness or neglect—it's simply the course of life and necessity. But enough of that. I don't think you suspect me.

In the course of the last 12 months I have seen Galsworthy twice—and that illustrates clearly the rigour of my solitude. Another intimate I have seen oftener but I am not likely to see anything of him in the future.¹ He's aggrieved—not I. But that is not worth talking about. Still after eleven years of intimacy one feels the breach.

My health has wonderfully improved in the last six months, thanks to a doctor who has volunteered to take me in hand. He's a friend of P. Gibbon—a B'wood "young man"² and a very good fellow as I found out on an acquaintance now over a year old. That excellent doctor came to see me last year with G, moved thereto by admiration (!) for my work. Obviously writing novels in not <a> such a waste of time as some severe utilitarians think. Here I am, then, with renewed hopes. They are just now temporarily obscured, because strangely enough, your good letter found us all more or less overcome by influenza. My wife made the best show. I am still, figuratively speaking, on my hands and knees. Indeed I feel so stupid that I doubt whether I am expressing myself intelligibly. You must forgive all the shortcomings of this epistle for I could not let the year end without making myself heard to you—even if I have nothing worth saying to utter.

With affectionate greetings from wife and myself to all your household believe me always yours

J. CONRAD

¹ Ford Madox Hueffer. Gerard Jean-Aubry, *The Sea Dreamer: Joseph Conrad*, Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1957, 232.

² Perceval Gibbon (1879-1926) lived for a time at Trosley, Kent. Aubry, II, 111. *The Vrouw Grobelaar's Leading Cases* was published by Blackwood in 1905. For obituary, see the *Times*, 1 June 1926, 19.

[*Jessie Conrad to Meldrum*]

ALDINGTON, | NEAR HYTHE, | KENT. | Feb. 6th, 1910

DEAR M^r MELDRUM

The novel is finished,¹ but the penalaty [*sic*] has to be paid. Months of nervous strain have ended in a complete nervous breakdown. Poor Conrad is very ill and D^r Hackney says it will be a long time before he is fit for anything requiring mental exertion. I know both you and dear Mr^s Meldrum will feel every sympathy with him. There is the M. S. complete but uncorrected and his fierce refusal to let even I touch it. It lays on a table at the foot of his bed and he lives mixed up in the scenes and holds converse with the characters.

I have been up with him night and day since Sunday week and he, who is usually so depressed by illness, maintains he is not ill, and accuses the D^r and I of trying to put him into an asylum. I know how grieved you will be and I hope surely before long to have a better report to give you. I have a favourite Aunt with me here who is a great help and comfort.

Trusting you all are well. | Believe me dear M^r Meldrum

Very sincerely Yours

JESSIE CONRAD.

[*In Meldrum's hand*] Ans Feb. 8/10

¹ *Under Western Eyes*, finished 22 January 1910. Quinn, 185.

[*George Blackwood to Conrad*]

[Edinburgh] 5th February 1913.

DEAR M^r CONRAD,

My brother and I are thinking that the inclusion of Lord Jim in our 1/- Editions might be a successful undertaking, and I am writing to ask if you would approve of the venture. We would be willing to undertake the cost and risk of publication

and would pay you a royalty of 10% on all sales, accounting for the sales 13 copies as 12. Our intention would be to publish this summer, and I should be glad therefore if you will let me hear from you as soon as possible.

Perhaps I should have written to Mr Pinker regarding this matter, but the original terms of the book were arranged direct with you.

&c

G. W. B.

Joseph Conrad, Esq.

[*Conrad to George Blackwood*]

CAPEL HOUSE, | ORLESTONE, | N^r ASHFORD. | 6 Febr. '13

DEAR M^r BLACKWOOD

I have been hearing for some time now that the booksellers tell people *Lord Jim* is out of print.

I would much prefer a new edition at 6/- leaving the Democracy of the book-stalls to cut its teeth on something softer.

But looking at the fact (as apparent in the successive acts) that the Copyright of both vols is practically of no value, it occurs to me that perhaps we could come to some arrangement by which it would return to me.

I have referred you[r] proposal to M^r Pinker who has those agreements dating back now 13 and 11 years

Believe me | Yours sincerely

J. CONRAD.

[*George Blackwood to J. B. Pinker*]

[Edinburgh] 24th November 1913

DEAR M^r PINKER,

I duly received your letter relating to your project to arrange for the issue of a uniform edition of Mr Joseph Conrad's books,

and I am interested in hearing about the matter, and think it is quite one which should be carried into effect. We would certainly wish to fall in with Mr Conrad's views as far as possible: but as you can understand after the encouragement which we gave to Mr Conrad both in connection with our Magazine and in connection with book form publications, we do not wish to see the two novels which we published removed from our list.

I have given the matter careful consideration, and I would suggest that we would agree to LORD JIM and YOUTH being published in the uniform edition on the understanding that we are at liberty to bring out these books if we wish to do so in our 1/- series, and to pay the author on the sales in that form 1½ d per copy, sales being accounted 13 as 12.

As you will recollect we proposed to bring out LORD JIM at 1/-, but at that time Mr Conrad did not approve. Probably he had this uniform edition in view, although he did not tell us so.

We think that this cheap issue would certainly not be detrimental to the other project but rather a help as it would bring the author and his writings before another class. And we would be willing to go ahead with LORD JIM, if the matter is arranged as we propose, for publication next year. It would be understood that we could bring out YOUTH at a later date if we desired to do so.

I trust that this proposal will meet with your approval and that Mr Conrad will also agree to it.

You have probably made arrangements so far with regard to the uniform edition, and this is not a project which you can put before us?

I am | Yours very truly,
GWB

J. B. Pinker, Esq.

[James B. Pinker to George Blackwood]

TALBOT HOUSE, | ARUNDEL STREET, STRAND, | LONDON,
W. C. | 28th. November 1913

George W. Blackwood, Esq.
45, George Street,
Edinburgh.

DEAR MR. BLACKWOOD,

I have to thank you for your letter of the 24th, and for your kindness in meeting Mr. Conrad's wishes. I had to consult him, so that your letter had remained unanswered until now.

Mr. Conrad gladly accepts the conditions you suggest, namely, that in consideration for your agreeing to our including "Lord Jim" and "Youth" in any uniform edition that we may arrange to publish in the future, it is agreed that you are at liberty to bring out these books, if you wish to do so, in your 1/- series, and to pay the author on the sales in that form a royalty of Three Halfpence ($1\frac{1}{2}$ d.) per copy, the sales being accounted 13 as 12.

I have not so far made arrangements with regard to the uniform edition, as it was necessary first of all to get the consent of all the publishers interested. If it prove possible later on to put the project before you, I shall be very pleased indeed.

Yours very truly,
JAMES B. PINKER

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF THE PINKER-BLACKWOOD LETTERS, 1903-1924

[*Pinker to William Blackwood & Sons, 16 February 1903*]
Sends formal notice of assignment from Conrad to Pinker. This was acknowledged on 18 February.

[*George Blackwood for W. B. & Sons to Pinker, 21 June 1904*]
No royalties beyond advances on *Lord Jim* and *Youth* have accrued as yet. "Besides the sum advanced to account of royalties there is a loan of £ 50 which was arranged with Mr Blackwood by Mr Conrad."

[*Pinker to William Blackwood, 25 August 1904*] He has discussed with Conrad the possibility of liquidating the debt. "Would it be agreeable to you if Mr. Conrad wrote for the magazine two short sketches to cover the amount?"

[*George Blackwood for W. B. & Sons to Pinker, 30 August 1904*] "Mr Blackwood desires us to say that he will be happy to liquidate Mr Conrad's debt of £ 50 in the manner you propose

. . . two short stories to cover that amount . . . if possible let us know about what time the stories will come forward."

[George Blackwood for W. B. & Sons to Pinker, 29 March 1905] Encloses "statements of royalties due to you from the sales of various publications, together with our cheque for the amount due £11: 11: 7d."

The temporary loan of £50 is still outstanding and no word of the promised stories has been received.

[Pinker to William Blackwood, 25 May 1905] Sends "Her Captivity."

[Pinker to William Blackwood, 5 July 1905] "Your letter of June 6th. arrived while I was in America. I have since consulted Mr. Conrad, and while he feels disappointed that you do not think the article justifies a larger fee than £13, he is willing that the arrangement should stand as you suggest."

[Pinker to William Blackwood, 5 September 1905] Sends "Initiation." "Mr Conrad hopes that you will think this worthy of a higher fee, and he will be very much obliged to you if you will publish it as early as possible."

[Pinker to William Blackwood, 3 January 1906] "I shall hope presently to send you either another sketch or a short story by Mr. Conrad, so that we may finally clear up his account."

[Pinker to William Blackwood, 9 August 1911] Sends "Freya" and hopes it will prove acceptable for Maga.

[George Blackwood to Pinker, 7 February 1917] *Youth* in a shilling edition would have appeared "long since" had it not been for the shortage of paper supply, owing to the First World War.

[George Blackwood to Pinker, 7 May 1917] Asks approval for raising the retail price on *Lord Jim* in their shilling edition to 1/3. The royalty would remain the same: 1½ d. a copy, 13 copies as 12.

[W. B. & Sons to Pinker, 3 April 1919] They will bring out a cheap edition of *Youth*.

[*W. B. & Sons to Pinker, 14 July 1920*] Information regarding the various editions of *Lord Jim* and *Youth*.

[*W. B. & Sons to Pinker, 3 November 1920*] Information regarding the serial and the book publication of *Lord Jim*.

[*Pinker to W. B. & Sons, 6 October 1921*] Wants to arrange for the inclusion of *Youth* in Nash's Half Crown Series and asks for the loan of the plates for this volume, "on condition that you are paid a royalty of One Pound (£1) per thousand. Mr. Conrad very much hopes that you will see your way to agree to the proposal."

[*Comment in pencil*] Dec[lined] D—n it! B.

[*W. B. & Sons to Pinker, 7 October 1921*] "We certainly do not agree to this proposal, as such an issue would undoubtedly affect the sales of our 2/ book."

[*W. B. & Sons to Eric S. Pinker, 19 January 1923*] They cannot give permission for the appearance of *Lord Jim* in Dent's Everyman Series as they are at present reprinting this volume in a cheap edition and do not intend to allow it to go out of print.

[*W. C. Wicken for James B. Pinker and Son to the Editor, Blackwood's Magazine, 7 August 1924*] Would the magazine commission Arthur Symons to write an article on "the late Joseph Conrad—the Man and His Genius"?

[*Comment in pencil*] Dec[lined] B

APPENDIX B

VARIOUS EDITIONS OF *Lord Jim* AND *Youth* AS
PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM BLACKWOOD & SONS, LTD.

Lord Jim

<i>Six Shillings</i>			<i>One Shilling</i> (2/- after First World War)		
October	1900	2100	January	1914	15000
December	1900	1050	December	1915	10500
November	1904	525	October	1917	10500
December	1905	525	August	1919	10500
			February	1923	10500

<i>Three Shillings, Sixpence</i> Pocket Edition			<i>Six Shillings</i> Pocket Edition		
April	1926	5250	January	1948	10500
December	1926	5400			
February	1928	5250			
June	1929	5250			
March	1931	11000			
December	1932	5250			
July	1939	2625			

Youth

<i>Six Shillings</i>			<i>One Shilling</i> (2/- after First World War)		
November	1902	3150	June	1919	15750
February	1903	1050	January	1922	15750
November	1909	525	August	1932	7875
			August	1939	7875
			June	1942	6000

<i>Three Shillings, Sixpence</i> Pocket Edition			<i>Six Shillings</i> Pocket Edition		
May	1927	5400	December	1947	15000
October	1932	2240			
April	1938	8000			
August	1939	500			

APPENDIX C

HENRY JAMES'S LETTER OF COMMENDATION TO
THE ROYAL LITERARY FUND

LAMB HOUSE | RYE | June 26th 1902.

MY DEAR GOSSE.

I have the highest opinion of the title Joseph Conrad would have, on literary grounds, to become one of your beneficiaries: all the more that in spite of his admirable work it is not so known to a wide & promiscuous public that his claims may speak wholly for themselves. He has been to me, the last few years, one of the most interesting & striking of the novelists of the new generation. His production (you know what it consists of,) has all been fine, rare & valid, of the sort greeted more by the expert & the critic than (as people say,) by the man in the street. His successive books have been real literature, of a distinguished sort, the record of his experience, in navigating years, of eastern seas, strange climes & far countries, all presented in a form more artistic than has been given to *any* "Tales of the Sea" among English writers & that approximates more than anything we have to the truth and beauty of the French Pierre Loti. *The Nigger of the Narcissus* is in my opinion the very finest & strongest picture of the sea and sea-life that our language possesses—the masterpiece in a whole class; & *Lord Jim* runs it very close. When I think moreover that such completeness, such intensity of expression has been arrived at by a man not born to our speech, but who took it up, with singular courage, from necessity & sympathy, & has laboured at it heorically [*sic*] & devotedly, I am equally impressed with the fine persistence & intrinsic success. Born a Pole & cast upon the waters, he has worked out an English style that is more than correct, that has *quality* & ingenuity. The case seems to me unique and peculiarly worthy of recognition. Unhappily, to be very serious & subtle isn't one of the paths to fortune. Therefore I greatly hope the Royal Literary Fund may be able to do something for him.

Do let me recommend him to you in the name of his charming, conscientious, uncommon work. It has truly a kind of disinterested independent nobleness.

Believe me yours always

HENRY JAMES¹

¹ British Museum: Ashley 4792. By permission of Mr. William James.

APPENDIX D

A LETTER CONCERNING STEPHEN CRANE'S "THE BLUE HOTEL"

37, PATERNOSTER ROW | LONDON E. C. July 23 1898

MY DEAR MR BLACKWOOD,

I have now read Stephen Crane's story, "The Blue Hotel",¹ and I cannot say that I find it very easy to give an opinion about it. It runs to about 25 pp. of *Maga*, I estimate, which is long, and yet makes it dear at £50. But these are not the considerations with which I have to do, and I only linger over them because I "funk" the others. Well, the story is extraordinarily strong: the situations are realized in a really wonderful manner. The characters are pictured so that you would know them if you met them: only the Swede, the central character, you couldn't meet, for he is killed in the end. The transformation of this Swede, by drink, from the coward to the reckless blusterer,—his exhibition of so-called Dutch courage,—is conceived in the best vein of ironic humor; it is very strong stuff, and would make a mark. On the other hand, it is not in *Maga's* line; altogether, it seems to me, too strong and brutal for *Maga's* readers. I am sorry, for I admire the story greatly and precisely

¹ Crane finished "The Blue Hotel" in early February 1898. At about this time he signed a contract with J. B. Pinker. (See John Berryman, *Stephen Crane*, 206, 208.) It is probable that Pinker sent this story to Blackwood.

for its strength, but I couldn't take the responsibility of advising its publication. It seems to me to be one of those cases where, greatly against our will, rejection is the wise course.

Believe me, | Yours v. truly

DAVID S. MELDRUM

[*Penciled in William Blackwood's hand*] M. S. handed to Mr. George. *Across the face of the first page:* George read this story and then ask your aunt Bee² to read it and if she thinks it too strong food for Magas readers then we must I fear decline it but Meldrums account of it tempts me rather to use it as we require some stronger stories to wake up people's attention. Shew your Aunt this letter when you take out the M. S. to her.—W. B. *On the final page in pencil:* I don't mind the brutality if it is not immoral and it is only human nature in low form W. B.

² Miss Elizabeth Blackwood (b. 1847), together with her sister Emma, kept house for her bachelor brother William at Gogar Mount, six miles from the center of Edinburgh. She was noted in the family for her "austere and presbyterian way of life." See F. D. Tredrey, *The House of Blackwood*, Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1954, 151.

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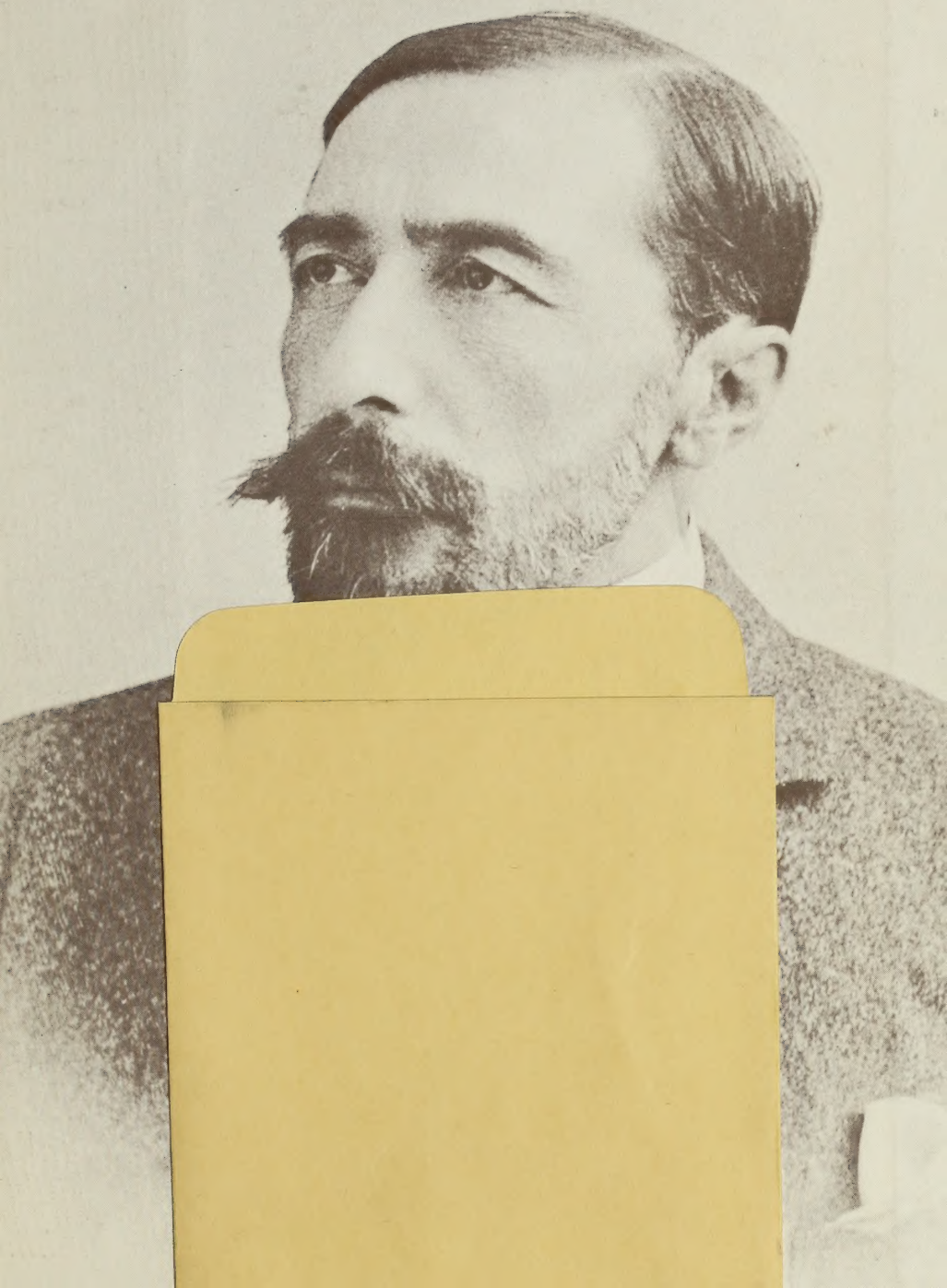
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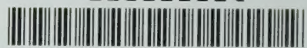
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